TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **Teachers' experiences of learners with disciplinary problems in secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal**is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SANDRA NAICKER   DATE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late dad, Teddy Tadden, and my late brother, Lennie Tadden.

In life you sang my praises – in death the lyrics spurred me on!

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to understand the teachers' experiences of learners with disciplinary problems. A literature study was conducted on various issues related to disciplinary problems in schools. In the empirical investigation a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological research design was used. The study was conducted in one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. The purposive sample comprised of 10 teachers who experienced discipline problems and two teachers who were knowledgeable about the issue. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the data were analysed and interpreted by means of the theoretical frameworks of the Bar-On Model of Emotional Intelligence and the Bronfenbrenner ecological model of child development. The findings revealed how disciplinary problems impacted negatively on the emotional and social well-being of the teachers. It was concluded that teachers needed improved coping strategies and collaborative support from the School Management Team and the Department of Education to deal with disciplinary problems.

KEY WORDS:disciplinary problems; Bar-On Model of Emotional Intelligence; Bronfenbrenner Ecological Model;emotional intelligence; teacher self-actualisation; teacher life-world; disrespect; overemphasis on rights; proactive disciplinary measures; reactive disciplinary measures

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ABBREVIATIONS

BEP: Behaviour Education Programme

DoE: Department of Education

ELRC: Education Labour Relations Council

EI: Emotional Intelligence

EQ-I   Emotional Quotient Inventory

HOD: Head of Department

RSA: Republic of South Africa

RSME: Religious, spiritual, and/ or mystical experiences

SMT: School Management Team

TAT: Teacher Assistance Team

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The task of being a teacher is arduous and demanding. According to the Norms and Standards for Educators (in Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), 2003b:47) a teacher is required to fulfil seven roles, namely learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning material; leader, administrator, and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; community citizen and pastoral carer; assessor and learning area specialist. Ramawtar (2011:7) confirms that teachers' roles not only involve teaching but also include social responsibilities as guidance counsellors, caregivers, nurses, leaders and psychologists. Teachers are constantly required to draw on their intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual resources to navigate around their various roles. It is incumbent on the teacher to always act and respond in an emotionally competent manner that meets the approval of the school management, colleagues, learners and the community when executing these roles.

The constant shuffling of roles places many emotional and social demands on teachers. Many aspects of a teacher's persona have to be delicately woven to present the teacher with emotional and social skills in order to act in accordance with what is expected by the various stakeholders. The South African Constitution, The South African Schools Act, The South African Council for Educators and the Department of Education (DoE) together with the school management structures broadly present the perimeters within which teachers have to perform their professional duties. The abovementioned encompass the policies, principles and procedures that are necessary to guide the teacher through the process of teaching and learning. However, despite the various formal structures, the process of teaching and learning, in the researcher's view, is ultimately guided by how a teacher feels and responds in the classroom. According to Van Wyk (2006:41), individuals who are happy and full of energy tend to be productive and successful. A

happy teacher will negotiate a happy learning environment, whilst a frustrated teacher will undoubtedly present an unproductive learning environment.

Disciplinary problems frustrate many teachers and create an unpleasant teaching and learning environment. Allen (2010:8) states that when disruptive interactions occur between teachers and learners, these sometimes lead to a chain of actions and reactions that spiral out of control, resulting in chaos in the classroom. The situation is exacerbated when the teachers are unable to control their emotions and impulses and resort to unsuitable or unlawful methods when trying to discipline the learners. Such encounters are characterised by displays of emotions that destabilise the process of teaching and learning, with the teachers pointing to the learners as the causes of the problems.

In my view, the learners are not always solely responsible for the chaos in the classroom. In my capacity as Head of a Department (HoD), I am frequently the first port of call when disruptive encounters occur in the classroom. When questioned why a teacher would engage in a 'slanging match' with a learner, or walk out of a classroom, the responses vary from, "Something in me snapped when he clicked his tongue," or "I could not control myself when she refused to sit down". Evidently some teachers lack the competency to reflect on their emotions and control their impulses and consequently react to the provocation in manners that are inconsistent with their professional identity (Van Wyk, 2006:46). Boniwell (2006:11) refers to this reaction as a "fight and flight" response. Teachers view themselves as being under attack and engage in a "fight and flight" response to retain emotional control during disruptive encounters.

Teachers who are in control of their emotions manage themselves better and share a mutually beneficial relationship with the learners, the parents, and their colleagues. Van Wyk (2006:46) asserts that teachers who are able to control their emotions, within the social environment of the school, amidst the multitude of tasks and personalities that are operational, generally maintain enthusiastic, confident and cooperative dispositions at school. However, teachers who lack the ability to control their emotions experience significant stress and unhappiness in their daily tasks.

My field of interest is the manner that disciplinary problems are experienced in the life-world of the teacher, both personally and professionally. My interest is piqued by whether the emotions and feelings experienced in the classroom dissipate once the teachers step out of the classroom and go home. Equally intriguing is how the teachers who experience disciplinary problems view themselves personally and professionally within the school and the community. Rangraje (2002:20) purports that teachers create a life-world that consists of a "gestalt of meaningful relationships" which they assign to different aspects of their lives. He elaborates and mentions that each teacher's life-world is unique because it is a totality of meanings as perceived by him or her. Ramsamy (2006:40) concurs that the life-worlds of teachers include everything that has meaning to them.

Within their life-worlds teachers have multiple identities. They have personal identities which are mental constructs of how they see themselves as ordinary beings; they have personal identities as mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, civic members or elders at their churches.

Teachers also have professional identities that are developed by the schools where they teach, and by the community that the school serves. Regarding their identities as teachers, Ramawtar (2011:ii) states that teachers have "multiple identities of who they are and how they respond from their positions as teachers". Many a teacher has articulated feelings of humiliation and worthlessness when unable to control disruptive learners. In 2008 Samuel (in Ramawtar, 2011:4) stated that in trying to understand the thoughts and actions of teachers, their individual meanings, practices and experiences must be understood. A disruptive encounter in the classroom cannot, therefore, be interpreted without also analysing why teachers behave the way they do when challenged by a learner.

The teachers' experiences in the classrooms are shaped, not only by their life-worlds but also by their emotional and social capacities. According to the Bar-On (2010:57)model of EI, "emotional-social intelligence is an array of interrelated emotional and social competencies and skills that determine how effectively individuals understand and express themselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures". Managing disciplinary issues in the classroom requires that teachers apply their emotional-social intelligence, not only to relate effectively with the learners, but also to understand and express

themselves better. Teachers who possess strong emotional-social competencies will invariably manage disciplinary challenges more skilfully than those who do not.

My study focuses on teachers' experiences of disciplinary problems from a humanistic perspective. It places the emphasis on the teachers' emotional and social competencies when experiencing disciplinary issues. It also places the teachers' experiences at the focal point of the disciplinary problem, and presents the teachers with the opportunity to reflect on the manner how they react to undisciplined learners. The teachers' emotions and reactions to undisciplined learners must be seen within the context of their life-worlds and their emotional and social capacities. In my view, this offers a refreshing study of undisciplined behaviour, because it allows for the teachers to reflect on their own emotions, impulses, and reactions as contributory factors to the chaos in poorly-managed classes. It affords the teachers an opportunity to hold a mirror to their experiences and to examine whether they could possibly have reacted differently to minimize the tension in the classroom.

Olivier and Venter (2003:186) state that teachers' reactions to stressful situations are varied and largely dependent on their personality types. Some teachers may view disruptive learners as a challenge and, depending on their personality types, they may embrace the opportunity to enhance their self-worth, and respond in a manner that would lead to their self-actualisation as teachers. Other teachers again, depending on their personality type, may feel dejected and worthless, and develop physiological and emotional pathologies that prevent them from self-actualisation.

The physiological and emotional pathologies experienced by teachers as a result of inner tension and conflict are commonly referred to as 'stress-related' pathologies. Many studies have been conducted on the factors that contribute to stress among teachers (Monareng, 2003; Peltzer, Shisana, Van Wyk, Zuma & Zungu-Dirway, 2009; Ramdan, 2009; Rangraje, 2002; Schulze & Steyn, 2007; Yoon, 2002). Emotional and physiological manifestations of stress include depression, anxiety, anger, frustration, high blood pressure, and heart and gastronomical ailments (Monareng, 2003:4; Olivier& Venter, 2003:187; Rangraje, 2002:121-122). Undisciplined learners are frequently listed among the main contributors of stress among teachers (Monareng,

2003:9; Olivier& Venter, 2003:189; Ramdan, 2009:16; Ramsamy, 2006:105; Schulze & Steyn, 2007:698). It is however, not empirically possible to link teacher stress directly to learner indiscipline. Schulze and Steyn (2007:691, 693) indicate that many factors contribute to stress among teachers. They state that contextual and personality factors should also be considered when identifying stressors among teachers.

The teachers' stress levels are largely dependent on the manner in which they experience the various challenges at school. Learner disciplinary issues present the greatest challenge to teachers (Lekganyane, 2011:2; Masekoameng, 2010:3; Subbiah, 2004:17; Tiwani, 2010:1). When confronted by unmanageable disciplinary issues, teachers sometimes experience hopelessness, powerlessness and "a state of paralysis" (Ramsamy, 2006:17). However, Van Wyk (2006:91) contends that emotions can be managed either constructively or destructively, and if the teachers enhance their own emotional-social intelligence, they may engage in the core responsibility of teaching within a constructive, positive and nurturing environment. Teachers who enhance their emotional-social intelligence will manage disciplinary problems more effectively than teachers who do not.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The main research question in this study is:

- *How do the teachers experience learner disciplinary problems in a selected secondary school?*

The sub-questions that emerge from this main research question are:

- *What are the findings of other researchers on the teachers' experiences of learner disciplinary problems?*
- *What could be recommended to improve the coping strategies of the teachers?*

Accordingly, the aims of the study are to

- determine, by means of a literature review,the findings of other researchers on the teachers' experiences of learner disciplinary problems;
- determine empirically how teachers in a selected secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal experience learner disciplinary problems; and
- suggest recommendations for the improvement of the coping strategies of the teachers.

The power of knowledge is encapsulated in Maslow's postulation that although human beings love and seek knowledge, they paradoxically fear knowledge that is personal, which transforms their self-esteem and self-image as well as their knowledge about their defences, repressions and insecurities (Monte, 1995:664).

Teachers desire explanations and solutions to deal with learner disciplinary problems but are often reluctant to search within themselves for answers. They are hesitant to acknowledge their own shortcomings when confronted with disciplinary issues. In this study I aspire to encourage teachers to engage in introspection to gain knowledge about their emotional inner-selves that may enable them to enhance their emotional-social competencies to cope better in the classrooms.

1.3   THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

1.3.1   The humanistic paradigm

In the mission statement of the inaugural brochure of Division 32 of the American Psychology Association, Resnick, Serlin and Warmoth (2010:76) state that philosophical humanism, existentialism and phenomenology form the foundations of humanistic psychology. The mission statement also acknowledges the aim to preserve the richness of the human experience and the challenge to develop a systematic and rigorous understanding of human beings.

The qualitative methodology of studying human beings, according to humanistic psychology, hence strives for insight into the full range of human experiences. It involves the holistic study of all aspects of human nature, including the individual and the group, social and political, physiological, cognitive, affective, imaginative and spiritual (Resnick et al., 2010:77). Conscious human experience is metaphorically regarded as the epicentre of human psychology. It contextualises the many aspects of human nature that contribute to the totality of the individual.

The humanistic paradigm presents a suitable theoretical framework for the study of teachers' experiences of disciplinary issues because it focuses on the primacy of human experience. It embraces experiences as holistic phenomena of human nature. The humanistic paradigm is also in synchrony with the phenomenological approach, focusing on experiences, and the Bar-On (1988; 2006; 2010) model of emotional-social intelligence, which focuses on the emotional and social competencies of individuals. The teachers' experiences and emotions form the focal point of this study, hence justifying the use of the humanistic paradigm. The paradigm tacitly encapsulates the aim of the study, which is to determine empirically how teachers experience disciplinary problems.

1.3.2 The Bar-On Model of Emotional-social Intelligence

The Bar-On (2006) Model of emotional-social intelligence presents a theoretical framework of emotional Intelligence (EI) that resonates with the theory of humanism. Bar-On (2010:55) presents empirical evidence to illustrate the relationship between EI and the theory of humanism, to which he also refers as 'positive psychology'. The positive human characteristics and strengths that are similar in both fields are, namely self-regard (accurate self-awareness); understanding the feelings of others (compassion, altruism, empathy); social skills (capacity for social interaction); group-identity and social responsibility (cooperation and teamwork); impulse-control (ability to control emotions); good decision-making (effective personal and interpersonal problem-solving performances); optimism and hope; self-actualisation (achieving goals and leading a meaningful and fulfilling life), and general happiness and subjective well-being (generating and using positive mood) (Bar-On, 2010:57).

The construct of self-actualisation is an integral concept of the humanistic theory, and Bar-On (2006:20) contends that there is a significant relationship between his model and self-actualisation. The teachers who set goals for themselves and their learners and achieve them, actualise their potential capacities, abilities and talents. Bar-On also contends that EI impacts significantly on successful performance, happiness, well-being and the quest for a more meaningful life, which are aspects that are integrally linked to the theory of humanism (Bar-On,2010:57).

The Bar-On model defines *emotional-social intelligence* as "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate to them, and cope with daily demands" (Bar-On 2006,:14). The five key components comprise many closely-related competencies, skills and facilitators. Intrapersonal ability refers to the ability to be aware of one-self, to understand one's strengths and weaknesses, and to express one's feelings and thoughts non-destructively. Interpersonal ability involves being aware of others' emotions, feelings and needs, and to establish and maintain cooperative, constructive and mutually satisfying relationships.

Teachers who are unable to manage disciplinary problems do not create productive and successful learning environments. Their relationships with learners are characterised by tension, disrespect and uncooperativeness which breeds a mutually destructive and unsatisfying relationship.

Since the aim of this study is to determine how teachers experience disciplinary problems and to suggest how they may improve their coping strategies, the use of the Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence is justifiable. The Bar-On (2006) Model of EI comprises an inspection of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships which urge teachers to examine their own strengths and weaknesses, and to reflect on the manner how they engage with undisciplined learners. By engaging in this introspection, the experiences of the teachers, the areas for improvement, and suggestions for coping strategies may be more comprehensively understood and addressed.

The Bar-On (2006:23)Model is operationalized by the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I), comprising five EQ-I scales, namely intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress-management, adaptability and general mood scales. The five scales are assessed by five corresponding interrelated EI competencies and skills. (The EQ-I will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2).

1.4   THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach is used in this study. Qualitative research involves the study of social phenomena from the participant's perspective and includes the participant's feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). It also involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to viewing the world, and proposes that things should be studied in their natural settings in order to make sense of or to interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning that people bring to them (Denzin &Lincoln, 2011:3).

1.4.1   Phenomenological design

A phenomenological research design is used in this study. It is a qualitative design used by a researcher to attempt to understand and describe how a participant experiences a phenomenon. Phenomenological research thus involves getting inside of people's heads to understand how they experience things. Hence, when using a phenomenological research design, researchers investigate what phenomenon was experienced, how it was experienced and the meanings that the persons assign to that experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:352). The emphasis is on subjective experiences and the concept of totality. Therefore this research design is suitable for this study.

Moller (1995:183) confirms that the phenomenological design is used in humanism to understand humans in their totality. The retrogressive method facilitates the understanding of humans' experiences from the "totality of situations, events and cultural values, according to which he directs himself, of which he has consciousness, around which his behaviour, thoughts and feelings revolve" (Moller, 1995:183).

I endeavoured to gain access to the inner worlds of the teachers in respect of their subjective experiences, which are regarded as their life-worlds. It is where 'lived experiences' and immediate consciousness exist, and is known as the "phenomenal space" (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011:368).

1.4.2   Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in this study. It is a sampling method where the researcher selects a sample that is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic attributes of the population being studied (Strydom & Venter,2002:207). The sample in this research comprises ten teachers at a secondary school who experience difficulty in managing undisciplined learners, and two teachers who are knowledgeable, and are interested in the issue.

1.4.3 Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing is used predominantly as a method of data-collection in qualitative research (Greef, 2002:292). It presents the researcher with an effective tool to ask relevant questions that encourage the participants to voice their inner thoughts, feelings and opinions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:350), interviewing also unpacks how the participants perceive, explain and make sense of their world. Interviewing is hence highly effective when attempting to understand the life-world of the participants, as it presents the researcher with an opportunity to examine all the aspects of a phenomenon as experienced by the participants.

1.4.4 Ethical considerations

The participants are an integral component of research studies. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:65) propose four guidelines to ensure that researchers are ethically considerate towards the participants in the research. They are, namely informed consent (subjects must agree voluntarily to participate after being informed about the nature and the consequences of the research); the avoidance of deception (deliberate misrepresentation must be avoided); respect for privacy and confidentiality (the participants' identities and research locations must be safeguarded); and accuracy (the data must be free of fabrications, fraudulent materials, omissions and contrivances).

I shall seek permission to do the research from the KwaZulu-Natal DoE (see Appendix A for proof of the permission that was obtained) and from the Ethical Committee of the College of Education at Unisa (see Appendix B for the ethical clearance certificate). The school principal and the teachers will be informed in detail of the intention and process of the research study, and their permission to be part of the research will be requested (see appendices C and D for the principal's consent form and the participants' assent forms). Strydom (2002:65) states that accurate and complete information must be detailed to the participants so that they may make a fully informed decision in respect of their participation. Informed consent is obtained when the participants agree to voluntarily participate in the research study and sign the assent letter.

1.4.5 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

The *trustworthiness* of qualitative research refers to "the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:324). Lincoln and Cuba (in De Vos, 2002: 351) refer to *trustworthiness* as the "truth value" of the study, and propose four constructs to establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The four measures are, namely credibility (which indicates how accurately the subjects are identified and described), transferability (which indicates the generalisability of the findings to other populations, settings and treatment arrangements), dependability (which refers to the researcher's accountability for changing conditions in the phenomenon being studied and changes in the design), and confirmability (which indicates the objectivity of the study by removing any evaluation from the inherent characteristics of the researcher).

These constructs will be further explicated in Chapter 3.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Disciplinary problems

Learner behaviour that interrupts the process of teaching and learning is regarded as disruptive behaviour, or a discipline problem. Accordingly, Tiwani (2010:12) refers to *discipline problems* as uncontrolled behaviour that includes storming out of the classroom, noisiness, refusal to cooperate, showing-off, teasing, and irritating and disturbing other learners. Weeks (in Tiwani, 2010:12), included talking-out-of-turn, calling-out while the teacher is speaking, making improper noises, disobedience, wandering about in the classroom, not paying attention, and attention-seeking behaviour as manifestations of disciplinary problems.

Allen (2010:8) contends that undisciplined behaviour leads to teacher-learner conflicts. Such conflicts cause undesirable interpersonal relationships between learners and teachers in the classroom.

1.5.2   Humanistic psychology

Abraham Maslow (in Engler, 2009:349), described *humanistic psychology* as a "third force" in American psychology, with psychoanalysis and behaviourism being the other two. He placed the emphasis on the positive aspects of human nature, and criticised both psychoanalysis and behaviourism for their limited conceptions of human nature. Rennie (2007:1)states that the limited conceptions of human nature were corrected by taking cognisance of cognitions, emotions, feelings, the will, morality, ethics, as well as interpersonal and transpersonal relationships, which concur with the holistic study of human nature.

Maslow (in Fiest &Fiest, 2006:273) also referred to the *humanistic theory* as a holistic-dynamic theory, because of the assumption that the whole person is perpetually motivated by one need or the other in their growth towards psychological health, which he termed *self-actualisation*. Carl Rogers echoed Maslow's (1987) fluidity of human growth by the conceptualisation of a subconscious valuing process which guides a person towards productive growth-experiences (Engler, 2009:360).

Humanistic psychology, with particular emphasis on experiences and emotional-social skills, provides the broad theoretical framework for this study.

1.5.3 Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Three of the more popular definitions and models of EI are those of Salovey and Mayer, Goleman, and Bar-On (in Cherniss, 2000:8-9). In 1990 Salovey and Mayer (in Cherniss, 2000:4) initially defined EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". They later redefined their theory to a four-branch model, which described EI as the ability to:(a) perceive emotion, (b) use emotion to facilitate thought, (c) understand emotion, and (d) manage emotion (Brackett & Salovey, in Geher, 2004:181).

Salovey and Mayer's definition of EI can be seen as a form of social intelligence, because emotions impact on behaviour which is socially defined. A teacher who decides to exercise restraint when taunted by a learner may have perceived the emotion of anger, thought about the consequences, understood that anger would aggravate the situation, and therefore decided to remain calm to diffuse the situation. This may be viewed as 'socially intelligent' behaviour, based on the abovementioned EI model.

Goleman's (in Mayer, 2001:9) emotional competencies model focuses on five areas, namely knowing one's emotions, managing the emotions, motivating oneself, recognising emotions in others, and handling relationships. Much of Goleman's focus appears to be on how individuals understand and manage their own emotions, and how this motivates them to act in relationships. He rejected the behavioural definitions of EI as being devoid of values, and perceived that compassion was an inherent value in EI (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010:11).

Bar-On (2010:57) defines EI as an "array of interrelated emotional and social competencies and skills that determine how effectively individuals understand and express themselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures". (This concept is further explained in the next section.)

Thus, all three of the abovementioned definitions emphasise that EI has to do with an understanding of one's own emotions and that of others, as well as how one manages one's own emotions.

1.5.4 The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence

Because of its emphasis on emotional and social competencies and skills, the Bar-On model is also referred to as the *emotional-social intelligence* model. Bar-On (2006:14) maintains that emotionally and socially intelligent people have a clear understanding of themselves and others, and are able to engage in effective relationships. They also manage their daily challenges competently.

Bar-On's model of emotional-social intelligence builds on the original conceptualisation of EI as proposed by Mayer and Salovey (in Cote & Miners, 2006:3). It presents a holistic description of emotional-social intelligence comprising intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that are consistent with viewing man in his totality. The Bar-On Model comprises five EQ-I scales, namely intrapersonal; interpersonal; stress management; adaptability, and general mood, that are assessed by the following corresponding interrelated emotional-social competences and skills, namely self-awareness and self-expression; interpersonal social awareness and interpersonal relationships; stress management, emotional management and regulation; adaptability, change management; and general mood self-motivation (Bar-On, 2006:23).

In 2005 Bar-On (in Van Wyk, 2006:17) described *emotional-social intelligence* as the ability to be aware of, to understand and to express oneself and to relate to others; the ability to cope with strong emotions and to control one's impulses; the ability to adapt to change and to solve personal and social problems, as well as the ability to maintain a general mood reflective of optimism and happiness.

Cote and Miners' (2006:3) conceptualisation of EI as the ability "to grasp and reason correctly with emotional abstractions and solve emotional problems" concurs with the Bar-On model emphasising the non-destructive, cooperative and constructive expression of emotions.

1.5.5   Life-world

Edmund Husserl coined the term *Lebenswelt* which is German for *life-world* (Christensen et al.,2011:368) in reference to the inner world of the subjective experience of a person. It is where 'lived experiences' and consciousness exist.

In 1988 Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (in Ramsamy, 2006:40) stated that a person's life-world is inclusive of his or her geographical world, and all the interactions with people, things, objects and themselves. Everything that adds value to a person, is his or her life-world.

Rangraje (2002:21) exemplifies the meaningful relationships in the life-world of teachers as including the following, namely direct relationships with themselves, their learners, others in the teaching profession, the parents, and stakeholders in the community. He argues that the hopes and anxieties that affect teachers are best understood by understanding their life-worlds.

1.5.6   Self–actualisation

Self-actualization refers to one's desire for self-fulfilment, which is attainable if one identifies one's true self, and reaches one's full potential (Burger, 2011:282; Maslow,1987:22).

According to Bar-On (2010:56),Maslow identified the following characteristic features of self-actualising people:
- self-acceptance;
- the ability to relate well with others;
- the capacity to act independently;
- social responsibility;
- the intent to solve rather than avoid problems;
- spontaneity;
- creativity; and
- a tendency to behave realistically.

Self-actualisation, within the context of this study, refers to the ability of the teachers to use their capabilities to reach their full potential in the classroom. It encompasses the ability to relate positively, independently, creatively and realistically in the classroom whilst in pursuit of self-fulfilment, both interpersonally and intra-personally.

Teachers who are in the profession for purely financial reasons should be true to themselves and acknowledge the fact that they do not see the profession as a calling. They therefore lack the initiative in fostering better learner-teacher relationships. Their self-actualisation as a person may elude such teachers.

1.5.7   Phenomenal field

The word 'phenomenal' is a derivative of the word 'phenomenon', which in Greek means "that which appears or shows itself*"* (Engler, 2009:359). *Phenomenal field* is defined as "everything that is potentially available to consciousness at any given moment" (Engler, 2009:360). It is the total sum of experiences. For example, teachers who are shouting at learners with whom they are angry may not be aware of the perspiration on their foreheads or their facial expressions. All of these feelings and expressions of rage form the sum of the whole experience of anger being consciously experienced by the teacher.

1.6 THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME – DIVISION OF THE CHAPTERS

This dissertation consists of the following five chapters:

Chapter 1 focuses on the background and orientation of the study. It includes the introduction and the justification of the study, the research paradigm, the research design and methodology, the clarification of the concepts, and the division of the chapters.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework within which the study is conducted. Models of EI, the types of disciplinary problems, the causes of disciplinary problems, and strategies to deal with disciplinary problems are investigated in the literature.

Chapter 3 details the research design, outlining measures to ensure trustworthiness, the ethical measures, the methods of data-collection and data-analysis strategies.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings of the study. A discussion of the findings within the humanistic theoretical framework and literature review is included.

Chapter 5 focuses on the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of the study. The justification for the study, research questions and a clarification of important concepts were presented.

In chapter 2the theoretical framework of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 presented an overview of and background to the research. The salient features of the Bar-On Model of emotional-social intelligence contextualising teachers' responses to disciplinary problems, was also briefly discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2 begins by exploring human behaviour within the humanistic theoretical framework. The concept of EI is investigated with the aim of ascertaining the skills and competencies that are necessary to enhance the psychological and physical well-being among teachers experiencing disciplinary problems. The Bar-On Model of emotional-social intelligence is presented. Thereafter, the chapter presents literature on school disciplinary problems, the causes of learner disciplinary problems, a historical perspective on disciplinary measures, strategies to deal with disciplinary problems, two intervention programmes, and, finally, strategies for teacher well-being.

2.2 THE HUMANISTIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

In 2008 Munhall and Chenail (in Kruger, 2011:3) stated that theory contextualises the "lived experiences" of the topic being studied. It was further stated that the theoretical framework of a study provides the structure within which the existence of the problem being studied and the findings of the empirical study may be explained. The theory of humanism provides a framework of 'lived experiences' for this study.

In 1965 James Bugental (in Hammachek, 1990:28), the first President of the American Association for Humanistic Psychology, postulated five basic tenets as a frame of reference for

the understanding of human behaviour from a humanistic perspective. The five basic postulates are:

- Humans, as humans, supersede the sum of their parts.
- Humans have their being in a human context.
- Humans are aware.
- Humans have a choice.
- Humans are intentional.

The behaviour of teachers, according to the above five tenets of humanistic psychology, may be interpreted as follows:

- *Humans, as humans, supersede the sum of their parts.* Teachers in the classroom are more than just a physical presence performing the singular role of teaching. Their presence in the classroom is a summation of their various roles and life-worlds, both in and out of the classroom. A teacher who enrols for further study engages in the role of a learner, whilst also being a facilitator of the school academic curriculum.
- *Humans have their being in a human context.* Teachers, as humans, are constantly engaged in human relations that define their interpersonal potential. The context within which teachers engage with their learners impacts on the manner how the teachers express themselves. Teachers are known to react in anger when learners repeatedly disobey instructions in the classroom, but such teachers may maintain calm and timid dispositions outside the classroom.
- *Humans are aware.* Teachers as humans are always aware of their past and current experiences within the teaching-learning environment which impacts on their future hopes and aspirations in the profession. Teachers who are consistently confronted with a lack of discipline in the classroom may experience disillusion and decide to exit the profession.
- *Humans have a choice.* Teachers make a choice as to how they assimilate a negative or positive experience, and hence they become active participants in that experience. When presented with unruly learners, teachers have a choice as to how they react. When teachers choose to react in anger and frustration towards unruly learners, their verbal,

emotional and physiological reactions are part of the experience of indiscipline in the classroom.

- *Humans are intentional.* When teachers make choices they demonstrate their intent to seek meaning and purpose in their lives. Their choices shape their identities as manifested in their life-worlds. Teachers who choose to find creative solutions to discipline problems in the classroom may do so because they wish to maintain a stress-free disposition in their other roles as spouses or parents.

Bar-On (2010:56) contends that the most prevalent human factors currently being focused on by humanistic psychologists are self-regard and self-acceptance. These factors are based on self-awareness; the ability to understand other's feelings; the capacity for interpersonal interaction, compassion and altruism, integrity and responsibility, cooperation and teamwork, self-regulation, problem solving, giftedness, optimism and hope. These factors impact on the following outcomes which are also studied by humanistic psychologists: optimal physical and psychological health, successful achievement, intelligent decision-making, creativity, self-actualisation and finding meaning in life, the ability to thrive and flourish, happiness, and well-being (Bar-On, 2010:56).

The humanistic theoretical framework revolves round the psychological, physical, social and emotional well-being of humans. It purports humans as being constantly evolving and aspiring towards a higher level of well-being in various spheres of their lives.   The teachers' experiences in the classroom are shaped by their physical, social and emotional well-being. Teachers who have chronic physiological ailments invariably absent themselves frequently from school. These teachers' frequent absences impact directly on the psychological, social and emotional climate of the classrooms. The learners may respond disrespectfully if the teachers do not make amends for the time lost. The learners' responses may reciprocally place severe psychological strain on the teachers. The stress of the classroom will undoubtedly impact on the professional aspirations of the teachers and may permeate into other spheres of their lives.

It is against this backdrop of interrelated relationships that this study is undertaken. The humanistic theoretical framework provides a holistic understanding of teachers' experiences both

in and out of the classroom. It provides an interpretive lens into the psychological, physical, social and emotional well-being of teachers as they move through their multiple life-worlds as humans.

2.2.1 The self-actualisation of the teacher

Bar-On (2006:20) describes *self-actualisation* as the process of striving to actualise one's potential capacity, abilities and talents (see sections1.5.4 and 1.5.6). It is characterised by the ability and initiative to set and achieve goals, and the desire to pursue various interests. Bar-On elaborates further that self-actualisation is a life-long process that is intended to enrich and validate life.

The process of self-actualisation for teachers is a life-long endeavour aimed at actualising their potential capacities, abilities and talents as effective teachers whilst pursuing an enriching and a meaningful existence. Teachers who successfully manage disciplined classes ultimately also derive personal satisfaction from their endeavours. Unmanageable disciplinary problems are viewed as impediments that prevent the teachers from self-actualising optimally. Such teachers experience difficulty in staying enthusiastic, and become frustrated and apathetic at school when their best efforts at maintaining discipline prove futile (Thompson, 2009:43).

Rangraje (2002:23) purports that teachers may only actualise their potential within the context of the teaching-learning process. They form meaningful relationships with other stakeholders in their school environment in their quest to form an identity that is in cognisance with how they see themselves as effective teachers. Most teachers desire control and respect in the classroom, as these are attributes of effective teachers. Rangraje (2002:24) states further that teachers initiate relationships that allow them increased control of their worlds. Disciplined learners add meaning to the life-world of teachers. According to Rangraje (2002:24), teachers self-actualise when their life-work is meaningful. Self-actualisation is synonymous with physical and psychological growth and the ability to control one's emotions despite challenges.

Disciplinary problems present a challenge to teachers. Many teachers experience despondency and react emotionally. However, the self-actualisation of teachers requires competencies that enhance their EI so that they may enjoy success and psychological well-being in their various life-worlds.

2.3 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

EI was defined in Chapter 1 (see section 1.5.3). In attempting to explain and investigate this concept further, it is necessary to begin with a brief history of the research of this concept, as chronicled by Mayer (2001:1-8).

2.3.1 Background study of EI

Between 1900 to 1969 research on intelligence and emotions developed as separate narrow fields. *Intelligence* was explained as the capacity to conduct valid, abstract reasoning, which was supported by biological investigations of intelligence (Mayer, 2001:2). Research on emotions investigated the 'chicken-and-egg problem', questioning whether physiological responses arose before emotions, or the converse. This era also investigated whether emotions had universal meanings, were culturally determined, and idiosyncratic. Darwin (in Mayer, 2001:5)presented the theory of the heritability and evolution of emotions across animal species. The search for social intelligence by psychologists was discouraged, and conceptions of intelligence remained cognitively-based.

During the period 1970 to 1989 the field of cognition and affect, which examined how emotions interacted with thoughts, emerged. Darwin's (in Mayer, 2001:5)philosophy of the evolution of emotions across species, and that emotions were universal expressions of internal feelings about relationships, were reasserted. The field of 'artificial intelligence' investigated how computer programmes could be developed to understand the feelings of story characters. During this period, Gardner (in Mayer 2001:5) developed the theory of 'multiple intelligences' which was viewed as intrapersonal intelligence involving, among other things, the capacity to perceive and symbolise emotions. However, Gardner (in Mayer, 2001:5) did not regard this access to feelings

as EI, and continued to regard EI as an inappropriate application of the concept of intelligence. During this period empirical studies were also being done on social-emotional intelligence and the brain, focusing on the separation of connections between emotions and cognition.

The need to consolidate the various strands of research, to explicitly define EI and to support it with relevant research, was recognised by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (in Mayer, 2001:7) between 1990 and 1993. Together they developed the first empirical test designed to measure EI, by examining evidence from research on intelligence and emotions in various fields. This period heralded the demarcation point for the emergence of the study of EI.

The period 1994 to1997 was noted for the book *Emotional Intelligence* by Goleman (in Brackett & Mayer, 2003:2), a science journalist who claimed that EI was "as powerful and at times more powerful than IQ". He postulated five dimensions of EI, namely self-knowledge; self-management and self-regulation; motivation; social awareness; and finally, relationship management (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010:11). Goleman (in Seema, 2012:17) regarded EI as an ability that can be learnt, and argued that it was the strongest predictor of success in the workplace.

The period from 1998 onwards is occupied by robust research on the existence of EI. Theoretical and research refinements in measuring EI continued to unfold. Despite the wealth of empirical research on the concept of EI, arguments on its existence continued. In 2002, Mathews, Zeidner and Roberts (in Geher, 2004:5) argued that EI as a construct was more "myth than science". Some assertions in their arguments included that the EI Models of Salovey and Mayer in 1990, Goleman in 1995, and Bar-On in 1997(in Geher, 2004:5)varied considerably, and that research on EI did not appear to be appropriately informed by existing studies. Landy (2005:411) sustained this argument by stating that there were many questions around the value of EI in reference to work-related behaviour. Researchers continue to debate the relevance of EI in the workplace (Baptista, 2009:66).

This brief overview of the study of EI tracks the initial arguments of intelligence and emotions as separate entities, and indicates that EI is affective and non-cognitive. A more detailed investigation of the Bar-On Model of EI follows below.

2.3.2   The Bar-On Model of EI

The Bar-On Model of EI was defined in Chapter 1 (see section 1.5.4). This Model evolved out of Bar-On's (1988:5) experience as a clinical psychologist. His focus was on developing an operational and theoretical conceptualisation of psychological well-being, as well as on the construction of a personality inventory that contributed to psychological well-being (Bar-On, 1988:1, 9). The study culminated in the conceptualisation of psychological well-being as a reference to one's overall psychological condition with implications for cognition, emotion and behaviour.

Bar-On (2010:54) hypothesised that effective emotional and social functioning should ultimately lead to psychological well-being. If people were able to recognise, understand and manage their emotions better during adversary and applied competencies that enhanced their social interactions then they would invariably experience emotional and psychological well-being. His study examined theories and studies on personality variables which revealed an association with optimal psychological well-being (Bar-On, 1988:59). The personality characteristics associated with psychological well-being that emerged from the study are, namely self-regard, positive interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, independence, flexibility, problem-solving, assertiveness, reality-testing, stress-tolerance, self-actualisation and happiness (Bar-On, 1988:61).

The abovementioned characteristics formed the basis of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) which was instrumental in the development of the Bar-On Model of emotional-social intelligence. The emotional-social intelligence consists of "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands" (Bar-On, 2006:14). The EQ-I is a self-report measure which consists of 133 items

which translates to one's EI score, which then resembles one's intelligence quotient score (Bar-On, 2006:15).

According to the Bar-On Model of EI, there exist 15 determinants of effective emotional functioning and psychological well-being (Gignac, Manocha, Palmer & Stough, 2003:1192). Bar-On (in Geher, 2004:137) described his Model of EI as a multi-factorial array of interrelated emotional and social competencies, comprising ten key competencies and five correlates and facilitators of emotionally and socially intelligent behaviour. The ten competencies measured by EQ-I are (Geher, 2004:138):

- *Self-regard*: the ability to accurately assess and accept oneself, including one's emotions.
- *Emotional self-awareness*: the ability to be aware of and understand one's emotions.
- *Assertiveness*: the ability to express one's emotions non-destructively.
- *Empathy*: the ability to be aware of and understand another's emotions.
- *Interpersonal relationships*: the ability to form and maintain intimate relationships based on emotional bonding.
- *Stress-tolerance*: the ability to effectively manage one's emotions.
- *Impulse-control*: the ability to effectively control one's emotions.
- *Reality-testing*: the ability to validate one's thinking and feelings.
- *Flexibility*: the ability to manage change, and to adapt to new situations.
- *Problem-solving*: the ability to constructively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature.

The five correlates are (Geher, 2004:138):

- *Independence:* the ability to be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others.
- *Social responsibility:* the ability to identify with one's social group and cooperate with others.
- Self-actualisation*: the ability to set personal goals, and the drive to achieve them.
- *Optimism:* the ability to be positive and hopeful.
- *Happiness:* the ability to feel content with oneself, with others and with life in general.

The 15 components are theoretically arranged into five broader hierarchical conceptual components, as listed below(Gignac et al.,2003:1193):

- *Intrapersonal EI,* which encompasses competences pertaining to the inner self (e.g., self-regard, self-awareness, assertiveness, self-actualisation).
- *Interpersonal EI* represents interpersonal skills and functioning (e.g., empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships).
- *Stress management EI* encompasses the ability to cope effectively with stress (e.g., stress tolerance and impulse-control).
- *Adaptability EI* represents how successfully one copes with demands from the environment (e.g., effectively managing problematic situations).
- *General mood EI* encompasses the ability to enjoy life (e.g., optimism, happiness).

2.3.3   Reason for choosing the Bar-On Model for this study

According to Bar-On (in Brackett & Mayer, 2003:2), EI primarily focuses on understanding oneself and others, relating to other people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate demands of the environment. Teaching involves all these aspects of EI.

Teachers often complain about the various demands of their work. They are constantly under public scrutiny, and have to tread the delicate path between their private and their professional worlds. Their ability to survive this emotional demand is best managed through the successful handling of personal emotions and social relationships. According to Van Wyk (2006:45), teachers who exhibit strong emotional and social competencies manage themselves and their learners better, and nurture mutually beneficial relationships with the parents, their colleagues and the support staff.

Van Wyk (2006:46) contends further that sometimes certain words and actions of learners facilitate reactions that exacerbate stressful situations. Teachers who are capable of reflecting on their emotions and controlling their impulses are likely to understand and manage themselves more effectively than other teachers. When teachers who lack effective emotional and social competencies engage with rude and deviant learners, there is often a heated exchange, resulting

in anger and stress. Manystudies exist that cite learner indiscipline as a cause of stress among teachers (Monareng, 2003:9; Olivier & Venter, 2003:189; Ramdan, 2009:16; Ramsamy, 2006:105; Schulze & Steyn, 2007:698). Stress is manifested both physically and psychologically in teachers (Bisschoff, Botha & Naidoo, 2013:181; Harris & Hartman, 2002:407; Jackson & Rothmann, 2006: 76).

Bar-On's (2006:18) findings on the predictive ability of the Bar-On model of EI have significant implications for the understanding of teachers' well-being. The ability to be aware of oneself, to manage one's emotions, to solve problems and to maintain an optimistic disposition impacts significantly on one's physical health.. Deficiencies in the competencies to manage one's physical and psychological health often leads to anxiety (an inability to effectively manage emotions), depression (an inability to accomplish personal goals) and difficulties related to reality-testing (an inability to verify feelings and thinking) (Bar-On, 2006:18). Anxiety and depression are often also the consequences of stress (Harris & Hartman, 2002:407).

In choosing the Bar-On (2006) Model of emotional-social intelligence to investigate how teachers experience disciplinary problems, I hope to unpack the emotional and social competencies that are operational during the teachers' engagement with the defaulting learners. The teachers who form part of the study will be requested to examine their interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships in order to decipher how and why they react the way they do towards undisciplined learners.

Bar-On (2006:21) states that the Bar-on Model is teachable and learnable. In 2001 a study in Sweden compared the EQ-I scores of 29 adults before and after a managerial-skills workshop where they were taught techniques to improve their emotional-social intelligence competences, based on the Bar-On Model. The findings revealed an increase in the EI scores from 97 to 106, as well as an increase in the emotional-social intelligence competencies of self-awareness and empathy (Bar-On, 2006:21). Another study involving 58 patients substantiated the claim that emotional-social intelligence competencies and skills could be enhanced.

The implication of these studies for the well-being of teachers is encouraging. Although Gignac et al. (2003:1194) posited that there were concerns regarding the discriminant and predictive validity of the EQ-I, they also acknowledged that it was one of the most advanced self-report measures of EI.

2.3.4 Why teachers need EI

Knight, Mudrey-Camino and Sutton (2009:130) rightfully describe teaching as an emotional endeavour. Teachers can experience a range of emotions from happiness, when learners pass tests, frustration, when a concept cannot be understood, anger, when confronted with indiscipline, and anxiety, when their competence is challenged. The teachers have to be constantly aware of themselves and the challenges of their job, whilst also nurturing effective learner-teacher relationships. The teachers are expected to navigate daily through this emotional mine-field in a manner that meets the approval of learners, colleagues, parents and other stakeholders in education.

According to Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2010:13, 14), emotionally intelligent teachers acknowledge that learning is a voluntary act undertaken by the learners. The teachers may employ varied strategies to engage the learners to learn, but the choice is ultimately theirs. Learning is dependent on relationships and on the social context. Teachers with a high EI are able to forge mutually respectful relationships with the learners across racial, cultural and socio-economic divides. Emotionally-intelligent teachers are able to understand their learners and the effect that their own moods may have on their learners. They are also able to regulate their emotions and create psychologically safe classrooms. Such teachers exercise restraint when learners are rude and disrespectful. Studies by Oginska-Bulik (2005:174) and Gall, Grewal, Kadis, Lopes and Salovey (2006:132)concur that a high EI enables people to facilitate quality interpersonal relationships, to regulate their emotions, and to cope more effectively with stress.

2.3.5   Disciplinary problems and emotional-social intelligence

Emotional-social intelligence provides a valuable approach to understanding why some people behave more intelligently than others, which is often illustrated in the effective decisions that are made in their personal lives and in their interactions with others (Bar-On, Bechara, Denburg & Tranel, 2003: 1798). Poor decision-making appears to correlate with inadequate intrapersonal knowledge of oneself (self-awareness), what one wants, and how this is conveyed successfully and meaningfully (self-expression). Bar-On et al.(2003:1798) purport further that people who tend to make the wrong decisions are less capable of controlling their emotions, of maintaining a positive and optimistic attitude and of choosing effective solutions.

When teachers encounter disciplinary problems, they have a choice to either *respond* or to *react*. To *respond* means the situation has been assessed, the evoked emotions have been recognised and the consequences of the proposed action/s have been evaluated before the proposed action is undertaken. For example, when a learner swears at a teacher, the teacher may become aware of anger and may want to humiliate the learner by engaging in a verbal tirade, but realises that such an action may exacerbate the situation. The teacher may, instead, choose to calmly ask the learner to leave the room. Should the teacher have decided to engage in a verbal tirade, the teacher's tirade would be regarded as a *reaction*. To *react* means that the decision is undertaken on the spur of the moment, without a thought about the consequences. Teachers who are prone to responses may be regarded as emotionally intelligent, and are likely to enjoy better psychological well-being than teachers who are prone to reactions. Teachers who react to undisciplined learners often face the additional burden of dealing with the negative consequences of their actions. For example, a teacher who reacts by slapping a learner who clicks the tongue in defiance, may face a case of assault, in addition to dealing with the disciplinary problem. Such consequences deflect the focus from the learner to the teacher, which may have a detrimental effect on the teacher's psychological well-being.

The manner how teachers handle disciplinary problems is thus dependent on their emotional and social competencies and skills. Teachers with a thorough knowledge of themselves and their emotions (intrapersonal EI) will foster an empathetic and mutually beneficial relationship with

their learners (interpersonal EI) by trying to ascertain why their learners misbehave. Seema (2012:22) states that emotionally-intelligent teachers may enjoy better interpersonal relationships because they are more skilful in managing the emotions of their learners. When presented with problematic learners, emotionally-intelligent teachers effectively and constructively manage and control their own emotions (stress-management EI), and are able to apply their minds to solutions that are realistic and adaptable to the situation (adaptability EI).Teachers who choose to deal with problematic learners at school rather than calling for the parent, are likely to adapt realistically to the socio-economic demands that do not allow parents to take time off from work to address their children's school needs. Teachers who manage disciplinary problems creatively and effectively are generally optimistic and happy in the profession (general mood). Seema (2012: 23) concludes that teachers with a high EI maintain a psychologically balanced disposition because they have a better understanding of their own feelings and are more resourceful in managing their emotions.

2.4   DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL

Any action by a learner that interrupts or detracts from the process of teaching and learning is commonly regarded as a disciplinary problem (see section 1.5.1). Fontana (in De Wet 2006:63) stated simplistically that any behaviour in the classroom that is unacceptable to the teacher or other learners may be viewed as disruptive behaviour.

Researchers concur that disciplinary problems impact on the process of teaching and learning (Bechuke & Debeila, 2012: 240; Mtsweni, 2008:25; Nthebe, 2006:1; Reddy, 1996:16; Shoba, 1997:14).   There are many variables at play when a teacher sets out to teach a lesson: a curriculum, a set syllabus, a lesson-plan and academic results that must be accomplished within a restricted period, which impacts on time-management. Teachers are therefore intolerant of any disruption to their lessons.

Rossouw (2003:423) maintains that the underlying cause of learner indiscipline is a lack of respect. Many learners appear to be disrespectful of rules, towards teachers, and with regard to the general structure of the school system. It is a phenomenon that is consistent with post-

apartheid youth defiance (Zondi, 1997:3). The misbehaviour or the problem-behaviour of the youth impacts on other learners' fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect and to learn (Tiwani, 2010:18). These fundamental rights also pertain to the teacher in the classroom. Undisciplined learners violate the rights of others by engaging in activities that detract from the lesson.

2.5   TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Behaviour that interrupts the process of teaching and learning may be categorised into three categories, namely disruption to teaching, defiance and disrespect towards teaching, and teacher-targeted bullying. They are manifested in many ways in the classroom. These ways will be briefly highlighted.

2.5.1 Disruption of teaching

Learners sometimes engage in actions among themselves that disrupt the process of teaching and learning. Such behaviour occurs during lessons, and include noisiness, tardiness, showing-off, teasing, irritating or disturbing peers, walking around without permission, incomplete homework, playing with cellular phones, making improper noises, inattentiveness, physical violence and verbal abuse (De Wet, 2006:63; Rossouw, 2003:423; Tiwani, 2010:12-18).

2.5.2 Defiance and disrespect towards teachers

According to Rossouw (2003.423), disrespectful behaviour towards teachers is very prevalent in the classroom. Learners often display defiance and disrespect in respect of rules, authority and structures of the school system. They react defiantly and disrespectfully when reprimanded by the teacher. According to several researchers (De Wet, 2006:63; Rossouw, 2003:423; Tiwani, 2010:12/18), such behaviour includes:

- disobedience;
- a refusal to keep quiet when a teacher is talking;
- a refusal to follow instructions or requests;
- calling out when the teacher is speaking;
- responding aggressively when caught with a cell-phone;
- storming out of the classroom; and
- disrespect for authority.

2.5.3 Teacher-targeted bullying

De Wet's (2006) study on bullying revealed that learners sometimes bullied teachers. According to him (2006:63), the learners engage in bullying to undermine the confidence of the teacher. Pervin and Turner (1998:4) found that teacher-targeted bullying by learners manifested as:

- Persistent, intentional, vigorous abuse in the form of threats, as well as actual physical assaults and the sexual harassment of the teacher.
- Swearing at or mocking the teacher.

- Knowingly ignoring the teacher.

- Making personal comments about the teacher.

- Damaging the teacher's property.

According to a study conducted by Pervin and Turner (in De Wet, 2006:63), in inner-London schools, approximately 91% of the teachers had at some stage experienced bullying by the learners. They reported being abused, mocked, ignored, sworn at, or having their property damaged. Similarly, De Wet's (2006:1) study in Free State schools revealed that approximately 50% of the participating teachers had experienced learner-bullying. They reported similar bullying patterns as those in the inner-London schools,and also added sexual comments, the spreading of rumours, and being forced to part with belongings (De Wet, 2010:191). Clearly, teacher-targeted bullying appears to be a serious issue in schools.

Attacks such as those mentioned above, infringe on both the teachers' and the learners' rights to safety. When taunted by learners, the teachers often engage in reactions that further destabilises the process of teaching and learning, resulting in tension and chaos. Teachers also experience severe psychological trauma in extreme cases of bullying. The case in the Western Cape of a young female teacher whose hair was set alight by a grade 9-learner (The Daily News, 2013:7) is an example of the extremity of teacher-targeted bullying. The attacks on teachers are becoming increasingly more violent as learner-discipline deteriorates.

2.6   CAUSES OF LEARNER DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Learner disciplinary problems emanate from many interrelated factors. In his multi-dimensional Model of Human Development Bronfenbrenner (in Pettipher & Swart, 2005:10) indicates that layers of interacting systems result in the physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural change, growth and development of a child. The complex ecological model explains the direct and indirect influences on a child's life by referring to the many layers of the environment or contexts that impact on a child's development (Pettipher & Swart , 2005:10). The environment or social contexts include the micro-system, the meso-system, the exo-system and the macro-

system that interact with the chrono-system which collectively are conceived of as "a set of nested structures" (Pettipher & Swart, 2005:10).

The micro-system encompasses the face-to-face social and interpersonal experiences of the developing child, while the meso-system comprises the linkages of two or more micro-systems, such as the school and the home (Phillips & Cameron, 2012:287). The exo-system also comprises of two or more systems, but is inclusive of one system that is not directly inhabited by the child but which may indirectly impact on him or her. For example, the parent's work environment impacts on the child, but is not directly inhabited by the child (Pettipher & Swart, 2005:11). The macro-system refers to the beliefs of the culture or sub-culture within which the child lives, and involves such influences as beliefs, cultural customs, opportunities and life course options (Phillips & Cameron, 2012:287). The chrono-system represents the time-frames which intersect through the interactions between the systems and their influences on the developing child (Pettipher & Swart, 2005:10).

The revised bio-ecological Model by Bronfenbrenner (in Kruger, 2011:5) includes the four fundamental interacting dimensions of person characteristics, proximal processes, systems or contexts and time, which are also contained in the ecological model. However, the defining feature of the bio-ecological Model is its emphasis on the *within person* characteristics in interaction with contexts,as well as between the contexts themselves. Pettipher and Swart (2005:14) describe three types of characteristics of a person that shape the proximal processes. They are (i) *dispositions,* for example impulsiveness, aggression, violence or insecurity; (ii) *ecological resources,* which includes bio-psychological factors, such as genetic defects, physical impairments, knowledge, skills and experience; and (iii) *demand characteristics,* such as hyperactivity or passivity, which either fosters or disrupts the psychological process of growth.

The bio-ecological model provides a holistic understanding of disciplinary problems in the classroom, because learners' behavioural patterns are shaped by many interlocking social contexts, as well as by biological factors. Ndamani (2008:177) claims that behaviour is affected by a combination of the physiological, physical and psychological environments.

The micro-systems, meso-systems, macro-sytems, exo-systems and chrono-systems of disciplinary problems are now examined in more detail.

2.6.1   Micro-systems of disciplinary problems

2.6.1.1   The learner

According to Ndamani (2008:178),a learner's behaviour is influenced by physiological factors, including biophysical factors such as illness, nutritional factors, neurological functioning, temperament, genetic abnormalities, physical disabilities, and drugs or medication. Learners who are ill or hyperactive are unlikely to concentrate on their lessons and may engage in disruptive behaviour. Landsberg et al. (2005:12) add that learners who are frequently absent from school due to chronic ailments may also have poor relationships at school. Traumatic experiences, sexual abuse, drugs and alcohol-abuse, exposure to pornography and assault are also regarded as causes of disciplinary problems in learners (Rossouw, 2003:426). Such encounters interfere with the learners' social, physiological and psychological development, and impair their relationships with family members, their peers and the teachers.

The teachers are quite vocal about learners' lack of self-discipline and respect (Mokhele, 2006:156; Strauss, 2006:20). Learners are frequently rude and non-compliant with school rules and academic demands. Strauss (2006:20) elaborates and mentions that learners often exhibit an awareness of their rights and a readiness to challenge adults, but are contrastingly unaware of their responsibilities. This lack of respect and ignorance of responsibilities also manifests in other systems that the learner interacts with.

The immediate face-to-face systems of the developing child are the family, the school and peers.

2.6.1.2   *The family*

The family is the primary micro-system in which a child is socialised. Socio-economic factors in the family unit have a profound effect on the well-being of children. Van Wyk (in Tiwani, 2010:24) highlights the impact of living conditions that include, for example, council homes and informal settlements, unemployment and female- and grandparent-headed households. Proper support structures and role-models are absent in such conditions, whilst the family's primary preoccupation is with survival.

In some instances the parents have no concept of how to interact with their children because they themselves were not exposed to nurturing environments (Smit & Liebenberg, 2003:4). Parents who apply discipline in a *laisez faire* manner inculcate lawlessness, indiscipline and anti-social behaviour in their children (Mabitla, 2006:19). Rossouw (2003:426) shares a similar view and adds that HIV-AIDS, poverty, illiterate or disinterested parents and dysfunctional home environments are equally disempowering to children. Learners who are exposed to regular arguments between their parents may act out such behaviour with teachers in order to vent their suppressed anger and disillusionment with their parents. Strauss (2006:21) and Lethoko, Heystek and Maree (2001:312) agree that adverse family circumstances and non-supportive families expose the children to fractious interpersonal relationships.

Ndamani (2008:181) exposes the nature of fractious parent-child relationships further by stating that parents sometimes condone poor discipline by perceiving their roles as being external to the school environment. Parents who are at odds with the school over discipline send mixed messages to their children. Poorly-behaved learners soon learn to play off their parents against the school, and *vice versa*.

A caring and nurturing parent-child relationship, congruent with the values and demands of the school, and living conditions that foster dignity are essential if a child is to flourish socially, psychologically and academically.

2.6.1.3   Peers

Learners share close relationships with their peers both in and out of school. Learners who do not enjoy nurturing home environments often seek solace in friendships. Rossouw (2003:425) and Gasa (2005:61) indicate that peer influence may result in the admiration for and the imitation of unruly behaviour, while Strauss (2006:22) contends that negative peer influences may force learners into joining gangs.

Mbatha (2008:24) concurs that the learners' behaviour is often influenced by their peers. They indicate that learner-on-learner bullying and sexual harassment among learners also present disciplinary problems at school. Victims of bullying often seek revenge to either stop the bullying or to gain recognition from their peers, which invariably exacerbates the problem. Mbatha (2008:26) further mentions that theft among peers causes behavioural changes in thelearners who have lost something. Evidently, whilst peer relationships are essential among learners, they may also have a negative influence on behaviour.

2.6.1.4   The school

The school as a micro-system exposes the child to a wider cycle of relationships that can either foster or impair the development of the child socially, psychologically and academically. Disciplinary problems at school are caused by a myriad of factors. These factors may be clustered into school structure factors encompassing leadership, infrastructure and the curriculum, and teacher-factors, including classroom-management and person factors.

(a)   School structure factors

The different school structure factors that are important include leadership, infrastructure, and the curriculum. These factors will be discussed next.

Regarding *leadership,* Mbatha (2008:22) and Lethoko et al.(2001:312) posit that ineffective school leadership and management impacts on learner discipline. Mbatha (2008:22) states that

principals who adopt an authoritarian leadership style promote violent behaviour in learners. Authoritarian principals sometimes do not consult the learners in the compilation of the Codes of Conduct adopted at a school, which in turn leads to learners disrespecting the Code of Conduct. Mokhele (2006:155) also argues that principals are often unsupportive of teachers who experience disciplinary problems. When teachers seek assistance from the principal, they are inevitably regarded as ineffective classroom managers.

With regard to *infra-structure*, Quan-Baffour (2006:78) states that the physical environment of a school as a teaching and learning site is vital to the physical and intellectual development of the learner. The school buildings often reflect the tone and discipline of a school. Schools depicting graffiti, unattended gardens and structural dilapidation generally experience more disciplinary problems than well-maintained schools.

Overcrowded classrooms, a high learner-teacher ratio and a lack of resources prevent teachers from offering individual and quality attention to learners (Lethoko et al.,2001:312). According to Thompson (2009:43), the allocation of large groups of academically weak learners together also perpetuates poor discipline. Learners in such classes are likely to feel alienated from their peers and suffer self-esteem issues resulting in behavioural problems.

The school's Code of Conduct outlines the discipline policy of the school. Masekoameng (2010:25) claims that discipline is successfully managed in schools where the School Governing Body consultatively draws up a Code of Conduct and implements guidelines and regulations in a uniformed manner. However, in many instances the Code of Conduct is not effective because, according to Lekalakala (2007:36), the DoE does not provide clear guidelines on what constitutes a well-disciplined school. Aspects in the Code of Conduct pertain to external factors such as uniforms, academic achievement and punctuality, among others. The finite aspects of unacceptable behaviour are often not clearly defined. The Code of Conduct is also ineffective when members on the School Governing Body are not fully equipped to deal with misconduct due to the members being inexperienced, illiterate or semi-literate (Lekalakala, 2007:36). Maluleka (2008:67) supports the notion that School Governing Bodies are sometimes ineffective because they are dysfunctional, which is frustrating for a school intent on fostering discipline.

Regarding the *curriculum*, the Education White Paper No. 6 (DoE 2001:19) states that learner behavioural problems arise from a number of issues, including the content of the curriculum, the medium of instruction, and the time frames for the completion of the curriculum. Since the birth of democracy in 1994, South Africa has undergone three curriculum changes, namely Curriculum 2005, thereafter a changeover to Outcomes Based Education, and in 2012 a changeover to curriculum 2025 (Reddy, 2011:88). Suffice it to say, both teachers and learners require time, understanding, patience and tolerance to keep abreast with the curriculum changes.

Reddy (2011:90) acknowledges that the curriculum changes have resulted in stressful situations for both teachers and learners. She explains that the abrupt changeover and different aims of each curriculum has led to much confusion, and that both the teachers and the learners are experiencing difficulties in implementing and receiving the content respectively.

Matodzi (in Tiwani, 2010:21) contended in 2000 that the school curriculum should be job-orientated and challenging to the learners. He argued that learners were likely to become frustrated and misbehave if they knew they would possibly not find employment upon the completion of their schooling. This argument is sustained by Mabitla (2006:31), who states that if instructional materials and activities do not reflect the learners' interest, it may be considered as too boring and complex to comprehend. He also argued that learners who are not competent in the language of instruction feel marginalised and opt for disruptive behaviour to divert the attention from their inability to understand the content of the curriculum (Mabitla, 2006:31).

(b)   Teacher factors

In respect of teacher factors, *classroom management* and *the teacher's personal characteristics* will be discussed.

Regarding *classroom management*, Woolfolk (2004:397) purports that the aim of classroom management is to maintain a positive and productive learning environment. She forwards three goals of classroom management systems, namely the maximum utilisation of the allocated time

for learning; greater access to participation in learning structures, and the development of self-management in learners. However, the teachers sometimes fail to create a climate that is conducive to achieving these goals.

Cullinan (2007:210) posits that the teachers are sometimes inadvertently guilty of perpetuating emotional and behavioural problems in learners. He states that:

- The teachers are not cognisant of the individuality of the learners.
- The inappropriately low expectations for achievement and performance that teachers perceive for learners become self-fulfilling prophecies of failure.
- The teachers are not able to manage individual and group behaviour competently.
- The teachers assign irrelevant and boring tasks to the pupils.

Cullinan's (2007:210) views of teachers implies that teachers sometimes lack the skill to "read the class" and they may opt for a "one size fits all" approach to lesson delivery which can be frustrating for the academically weak learner and unchallenging for the brighter learner.

Mbatha (2008:21) concurs with Cullinan(2007),and cites the poor planning of teachers as a contributory factor to disciplinary problems in the classroom. Besides planning how to manage their learners, the teachers must also have a clear knowledge of the requirements of the curriculum and suitable instructional methods before they enter the classroom. A plan detailing what is to be achieved in a single lesson leading to the successful completion of the entire syllabus provides structure to both the teacher and the learner.

However, Strauss (2006:21) reported that misbehaviour may also occur in classrooms with a "strict classroom regime". Learners reportedly misbehave as a consequence of the manner in which the classroom and the academic load are managed. The inflexible implementation of the curriculum and the teacher's dependence on punishment to correct undisciplined behaviour often leads to antagonism from the learners (Mabitla 2006:30).

Coetzer, Drinkwater, Hutton, Kitching, Moloi, Mentz, Rens, Rossouw, Rossouw, Schouwstra, Smit, Smith, Vreken and Wolhuter (2010:10) maintain that the lesson tempo is important in

preventing disciplinary problems. Lessons that are taught very fast discourage and frustrate the learners, whilst lessons that are taught too slowly bore them. Thompson (2009:43) maintains that the teachers sometimes do not listen to their learners' concerns or queries, causing them to become disinterested in the lesson. She adds that the teachers who do not include a variety of activities in their lessons fail to sustain the attention of their learners.

Classroom rules are an essential component of classroom management. The rules guide the standards of behaviour that are acceptable to both parties in the classroom, and must therefore be compiled in consultation with the learners (Mokhele, 2006:155). Rules serve as deterrents only if the need for the rule and the consequences of breaking it is clearly understood and respected.

Regarding the *teachers' personal characteristics*, it should be noted that teachers anchor the process of teaching and learning in schools. It is therefore imperative that they acknowledge their role in steering the process, and their ability to navigate around discipline in schools.

Coetzer et al. (2010:7) provide the following categorisation of the teachers' behavioural patterns that presents a good understanding of how the teachers' attitudes inadvertently cause disciplinary problems in the schools:

- *Spectator teachers:* Spectator teachers are oblivious to what is going on around them. They are usually absent-minded because they are pre-occupied with their own thoughts and fantasies. They lack confidence, and experience difficulty in forming relationships with the learners and their colleagues. These teachers pounce on passive learners who appear to be inattentive in class.
- *Untouchable teachers:* A strong authority-orientation characterises the behaviour of untouchable teachers. The learners are viewed as subordinates who are expected to follow instructions unquestioningly. These teachers foist their will on others who neither expect it nor wish to be controlled in that manner. Their behaviour leads to increased levels of anxiety and conflict which may impact on the learners' behaviour and ability to learn.

- *Perfectionist teachers:* Such teachers engage the learners in win-lose confrontations that must be won by the teacher. They relish exposing other's weaknesses and then compare such learners' endeavours to their own.

- *Approval-seeking teachers:* Approval-seeking teachers generally possess a low self-esteem. They are fearful of rejection and constantly seek approval from others. They display an inconsistent approach to discipline, and flexibility in their behaviour. Learners may often abuse this indulgence, thereby creating opportunities for misbehaviour.

- *Routinist teachers:* Routinist teachers view organisational matters seriously. They adhere strictly to procedures and guidelines. They expect correct, complete answers to their questions in class, tests and examinations. Their rigid behaviour sometimes evokes tension because the learners' initiatives and freedom of expression are suppressed.

- *Teachers with unreasonable expectations:* Such teachers do not offer assistance to the learners. They expect the learners to complete assignments and to solve their problems on their own. They show little empathy for learners who are shy or withdrawn.

Thus, the attitudes of teachers impact significantly on the manner how they interact with their learners.

Perhaps the most important quality that a teacher should possess is *respect,* because 'respect begets respect'. Learners disrespect teachers who behave unprofessionally (Lethoko et al., 2001:312). Mokhele (2006:155) stresses that teachers who make sarcastic comments and show no respect towards their learners provoke them into acting aggressively. Thompson (2009:43) claims that learners are equally provoked to act defiantly when teachers are rude and display a 'holier than you' attitude. Zondi (1997:26) explains further that if teachers scold learners and insult them or undermine their abilities, the learners may become insolent or aggressive toward the teacher.

Demotivated teachers also influence discipline. Rossouw (2003:416) states that poorly-qualified teachers do not command discipline in the classroom. This assertion, however, is arguable because many qualified teachers also experience disciplinary problems. Mbatha (2008:22) and Mokhele (2006:155) assert that demotivated teachers do not report to class punctually and/or are

frequently absent from lessons. These teacher-behaviours promote apathy among the learners because of the lack of continuity in the lessons and the inability of learners to be on par with their peers in other classes. Demotivated teachers are reluctant to make amends for time lost. Such teachers present poor role-models to their learners.

Studies also reveal that learners behave poorly when teachers apply rules inconsistently (Strauss, 2006:21; Thompson, 2009:43). The teachers are accused of favouritism when they condone behaviour in some, but apply the rules rigidly to others. The learners also feel victimised, and retaliate when the teachers "pick on them for no reason" (Thompson, 2009:43).

According to Naidoo (2011:100), teachers who are incapable of managing personal stress may display aggressiveness in the classroom, which could evoke tension with the learners. Teachers experiencing personal relationship problems have difficulty balancing their school obligations with their family life. Such teachers are usually intolerant to petty misbehaviour which they would otherwise overlook.

Despite qualifications and experience, teachers may still encounter difficulties in managing discipline due to a lack of interactional skills. Teachers who disregard the thoughts and interests of their learners and objectify them into manageable underlings may experience disciplinary problems (Masekoameng, 2010:21). Learners seek opportunities to voice their opinions so that they may feel part of the lesson. If such eagerness and enthusiasm is constantly denied or not appropriately handled because the teacher lacks the skill to integrate it into the lesson, the learners may become frustrated and resistant to the teacher. The learners are likely to behave negatively in such an environment.

The teacher's tone of voice and volume is an invaluable skill in maintaining discipline in the classroom. Coetzer et al.(2010:15) state that teachers who habitually raise their voices for minor misbehaviours in class often have noisy or restless classes. The negative atmosphere that is created confuses the learners as to why the teacher may be angry. A healthy and suitable noise level must be negotiated at the beginning of the year so that the learners are fully aware at which

point they may have transgressed the boundary. Teachers with a low but commanding tone of voice create peaceful classrooms.

Teacher training fails to cover the problems related to learner behavioural issues. Subsequently when the educators are appointed to schools, they lack the adequate skills and knowledge to deal with disciplinary problems. Strauss (2006:20) confirms that teachers are not trained to handle difficulties at school, which explains why teachers are inadvertently participatory to learner misbehaviour.

2.6.2   Meso-systems of disciplinary problems

The *meso-system* is a system of micro-systems that comprises the interaction of two or more systems, such as the school and the home (Pettipher & Swart., 2005:11). The meso-system in this study is the interactions between the home and the school.

A healthy nurturing relationship between the school and the home breeds a balanced and well-rounded child. The meso-system of a child displaying behavioural problems warrants a discussion of the nature of the relationship between the two primary micro-systems.

Smit and Liebenberg (2003:1) assert that family-school relations should be the prioritised focus of schools. Their study revealed that a substantive rift existed between parents and teachers, and learners appeared to be floundering in the middle. The parents sometimes experience schools as intimidating and inaccessible, and argue that schools are out of touch with the realities of the community. Families experiencing severe socio-economic conditions such as unemployment, homelessness, alcohol and drug-abuse or divorce generally do not prioritise their children's schooling. Finding the time to report to school to to discuss their children's behaviour is the least of their problems.

Mbokodi, Msila and Singh (2004:304) argue that teachers regard parents as not doing their share of the work. The teachers seek collaboration from the parents so that learner-teacher-parent relationships may be strengthened and the life-worlds of the learners may be better understood.

Evidently this is not so, as Mbokodi et al.(2004:304) reported that 70% of the parents in his study were uncertain about what was wrong with the education of their children, but many thought that something was wrong with the education system. The lack of collaboration prevents both parties from mapping a path forward for a child displaying behavioural problems. The meso-system of a child displaying behavioural problems is hence likely to reveal tension between the school and the family.

2.6.3   The exo-system of disciplinary problems

The exo-system also comprises of two or more systems but is inclusive of one system that is not directly inhabited by the child but which may indirectly impact on him or her. For example, the parent's work environment impacts on the child but is not directly inhabited by the child (Landsberg et al., 2005:11).

The exo-system encompasses relationships and interactions in the educational, social and political systems. The systems may include the extended families, neighbours, gangs, the DoE and socio-economic conditions. The exo-system in this study will be the relationships and interactions that the learners have with gangs, poverty and the DoE.
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Mabitla (2006:25) views gangs as extended families to whom loyalty is obligatory. Learners who do not enjoy a nurturing home environment may seek identity with a gang and subsequently engage in disruptive and anti-social behaviour. Poverty has cyclic effects on the home and school environments. Learners whose parents are unemployed or who are facing financial difficulties or are being threatened with eviction may have fragmented interactions with the school. Self-esteem and survival issues force the learners into acting-out their frustrations at school, that in turn blames the parents for not disciplining their children.

Legislation pertaining to discipline in the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC, 2003d:7) is often regarded as being counter-productive. The legislated processes prescribed for disciplinary action against misbehaving learners prevents immediate strong action against the

learner (Rossouw, 2003:425). The teachers may decide to ignore taking disciplinary action because the process is perceived as tedious and biased towards the learner.

2.6.4   The macro-system of disciplinary problems

The *macro-system* refers to the beliefs of the culture or sub-culture within which the child lives. It involves such influences as beliefs, cultural customs, opportunities, and life-course options (Phillips & Cameron, 2012:287). The macro-system in this study will be the culture of disrespect and ill-discipline, and the over-emphasis on the legal rights of individuals and organisations that exist in the South African societal system.

Many studies list the abovementioned factors as contributory to disciplinary problems in schools (Lethoko et al.,2001: 312; Mokhele, 2006:155; Rossouw, 2003:416; Strauss, 2006:20; Thompson, 2009:43). The South African society is a fledgling democracy where there appears to be a heightened awareness of one's constitutional rights and the need to use it to defend any wrongdoing. However, there appears to be little discussion on the responsibilities and obligations which are reciprocally linked to constitutional rights. This ideology appears to permeate most relationships and interactions of learners exhibiting disciplinary problems.

2.6.5   The chrono-system of disciplinary problems

The chrono-system in this study refers to the simultaneous changes occurring in the socio-economic status of the family, the community, the education system and the society inhabited by the learner, over a chronological period. An adolescent may be experiencing physiological developmental changes in a dysfunctional family whose status is constantly changing, at the same time that the school curriculum is undergoing political transformation. The interrelated effect of these changes cannot be ignored as they play a pivotal role in understanding the complex nature of human behaviour. Inglis (2009:29) cautions against seeking the 'cause' of a phenomenon in one system only.

The Bronfenbrenner (in Kruger, 2011:5) Bio-ecological Model functions in a 'dominoes effect – a knock on one system results in the fall of another system'. Disciplinary problems viewed through the lens of the Bio-ecological Model, requires an understanding of all the systems in which the learner interacts.

2.7 STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

2.7.1 Historical perspective on disciplinary measures

Prior to 1994, corporal punishment was widely used as a disciplinary measure in the classroom. According to the DoE (2000:7) in a document entitled *"Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: a Practical Guide for Educators",corporal punishment* is defined as any deliberate act that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to children in an attempt to punish or contain them. These acts include, but are not limited to spanking, pinching, slapping, paddling or hitting a child with the hand or with an object; denying or restricting a child's use of the toilet, denying meals, drink, heat and shelter, pushing or pulling a child with force, or forcing the child to do exercise.

Maphosa and Shumba's (2010:392-394) study indicated that many teachers were in favour of corporal punishment in the classroom. According to the participants, corporal punishment helped to keep the learners focused and served as a disciplinary measure that deterred the learners from misbehaving. However, in 1996 with the adoption of a new South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996a), corporal punishment became a violation of human rights. It was interpreted according to the Bill of Rights 12 (1) (e) as being cruel, inhuman and degrading to the child, and hence banned(RSA, 1996a:8).

With the banning of corporal punishment, there arose a heightened awareness of human rights among the learners. They were aware that teachers faced legal sanctions if taken to court. This knowledge tilted the power in the classroom in favour of the learner which, according to Metsweni (in Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:389), resulted in teachers feeling incapacitated and helpless.

Learner discipline presents the greatest challenge in the current South African educational system (Coetzer et al., 2010:xi). Disrespect for teachers, an overemphasis of learners' rights, and an apparent disregard for teachers' rights, is symptomatic of the crisis in learner discipline. Coetzer et al., (2010:1) pointed to the possibility that the change in learner discipline was related

to the abolishment of corporal punishment. This exposed the teachers' dependence on the cane as an attempt to maintain discipline.

Zondi (1997:3) concurs that the profile of the learner has changed in post-apartheid South Africa. The learners' passiveness and submissiveness to authority has been replaced by a mind-set to do as they please. This change in attitude by the learners, together with the heightened awareness of their constitutional rights, seemed to have disempowered teachers. Naong (2007:283) states that a sense of despair and low morale is prevalent among teachers after the abolition of corporal punishment. Whilst previously the cane represented a deterrent to undisciplined behaviour, today the use of the cane signals the demise of a teacher's career.

The following Acts provide the legal determinants within which teachers must choose disciplinary measures: The Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996(RSA, 1996a); the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC, 2003d: 7-8); the South African Council of Educators Act, Act 31 of 2000 (in ELRC, 2003c:17-18) and the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 (in ELRC,2003a: 9). These four acts are described in the following section.

2.7.1.1   The Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996

Chapter 2 Sections 12(1) (c); (d) and (e) of the Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a:7) have particular relevance for disciplinary measures chosen by teachers. According to these clauses, violence, torture in any form, or the cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment of learners is prohibited. Hence teachers are liable to be charged if they hit learners (violence); subject learners to prolonged squatting (torture), or humiliate or degrade learners. These clauses were directly responsible for the abolition of corporal punishment.

2.7.1.2   The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996

Section 8 (1) and (2) of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (in ELRC, 2003d:7-8) refers to the adoption of a Code of Conduct by the Governing Body aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment. The Code of Conduct makes provision for the establishment of rules governing discipline and safety, disciplinary measures for those in breach of the rules and disciplinary proceedings. When addressing indiscipline, teachers must ensure that their discipline strategies are embedded in the school's Code of Conduct. A teacher who requests that a learner be suspended for swearing in the classroom, may be acting in conflict with the Code of Conduct if the disciplinary measure for such an offence is a verbal warning. The teachers may not choose disciplinary measures that are not enshrined in the Code of Conduct.

2.7.1.3   The South African Council of Educators Act, Act 31of 2000

The Code of Professional Ethics for teachers is enshrined in The South African Council of Educators Act, Act 31 of 2000 (in ELRC, 2003c:17). It clearly defines the perimeters within which a teacher must act to maintain discipline in the classroom. When deciding how disciplinary problems must be handled in the classroom, clauses 3(4); 3(5); 3(6) and 3(10) are relevant. They stipulate that a teacher must act with compassion; avoid any form of humiliation; refrain from any form of physical or psychological abuse; and desist from improper physical contact with learners. Instead, teachers must engage in appropriate language and behaviour that elicit respect from learners.

According to these clauses, disciplinary measures involving sarcasm, name-calling, ridiculing or doing exercises for lengthy periods are prohibited. A teacher who lashes out in anger is in contravention of the Code of Professional Ethics (in ELRC, 2003c:17),because such behaviour does not elicit respect from the learners.

2.7.1.4   *The Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998*

Chapter 5 of the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 (in ELRC, 2003a:9) pertains to the teachers' incapacity and misconduct. Clause 17 (1) (d) categorises the assault of a learner or employee as a serious misconduct; clause 18 is categorised as misconduct. Of relevance to learner disciplinary measures is clause (1) (k) which forbids all forms of discrimination against any member of the school; clause 18 (1) (r) which refers to assault, attempts to assault and threats to assault, and clause 18 (1) (u) which prohibits the intimidation or victimisation of learners and teachers. Teachers may be charged under clause (1)(k) if they discriminate against disruptive learners by asking them to sit on the floor; or if disruptive learners are constantly reminded of their misdemeanours. If such learners are always asked to respond to questions, they may interpret this as victimisation under clause 18 (1) (u). A teacher who attempts to slap a learner or threatens to slap a learner, may be charged under clause 18 (1) (u).

The abovementioned laws have resulted in the banning of corporal punishment, which was widely accepted as an effective disciplinary measure. Sihle (2008:5) espouses that corporal punishment was regarded as effective because society at large and the teachers in particular confuse discipline with physical punishment. The widely-held perception was that when children step out of line some form of physical punishment was necessary to teach them a lesson. Many teachers who have themselves come through the system of corporal punishment at school as learners grapple with finding alternatives to corporal punishment. Professor Kader Asmal, in *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* (DoE, 2000:7), stated that corporal punishment was favoured because it was quick and easy, whilst other methods required time, patience and skill, which teachers often lacked.

2.8 POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES

Disciplinary strategies may be categorised into proactive and reactive disciplinary strategies. According to Clunies-Ross, Kienhuis and Little (2008:695),*proactive* strategies refer to behaviour that the teachers implement before problems arise, for example the establishment of rules. These strategies are preventative and are intended to deter learners from misbehaving. *Reactive* strategies refer to teacher behaviour that is administered after an undisciplined act, for example after-school detention for non-submission of homework (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008:695).

A discussion on possible disciplinary measures follows.

2.8.1 Proactive disciplinary measures

2.8.1.1   Code of Conduct

According to section 8 of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC, 2003d:7), a Code of Conduct for a school must be drawn in consultation with the School Governing Body and the learners to assist the schools in maintaining discipline. A well-constructed Code of Conduct that is clearly understood and respected by the learners covertly encourages learners into acceptable standards of behaviour. Some schools have creatively woven a system of merits and demerits into the Code of Conduct, but it is sometimes not a chosen option by teachers because of the immense paperwork involved (Rossouw, 2003:430).

2.8.1.2   Classroom management

The ability to maintain order in the classroom is the greatest challenge facing teachers, and is perceived as the most difficult aspect of teaching (Bechuke & Debeila, 2012:241). Classroom management is a term that is commonly used to describe the process of ensuring that lessons are delivered smoothly despite learner disciplinary problems. According to Lefrancois (1997:381), *classroom management* refers to disciplinary actions, daily routines, seating plans and the scheduling of lessons. Great effort, commitment, resourcefulness and perseverance are vital in the quest for effective classroom management.

Two models of classroom management are the Kounin's Management Model (in Lefrancois, 1997:391-393) and the Marland's Caring for Children Model(in Lefrancois, 1997:388-90).

These two models are now explained.

(a)   Kounin's Management Model

The Kounin Model features with-it-ness; overlapping; smoothness and momentum; and maintaining focus(Lefrancois, 1997:391-393).

- *With-it-ness* is teacher behaviour that describes a teacher's awareness of everything that is happening in the classroom at all times. It is a technique that discourages learners from misbehaving because the teacher's eyes are always on them. When a learner attempts to misbehave a polite instruction to refrain from the behaviour often desists other learners from attempting likewise.
- *Overlapping* is a technique that allows a teacher to engage in two or more activities simultaneously without detracting from the flow of a lesson. For example, a teacher engaged in reading may intercept a note being passed between two learners without calling out, whilst continuing to read. This allows for the lesson to continue uninterrupted.
- *Smoothness and momentum* allow for the transition from one activity to another during the lesson without undue delay and loss of attention. For example, whilst an oral

presentation is being done a teacher may tactfully place a worksheet on the desk for completion immediately after the presentation, without waiting for the presentation to be over. This allows for the written task to commence with minimum disruption and time-loss.

- *Maintaining focus* is best attained by developing accountability in learners (taking notes, listening for key-words, answering in unison), using group-alerting cues (asking questions at random, single and group-answering), and altering the format of classroom activities to prevent boredom (interchange reading with a written activity or dramatisation).

(b)   Marland's Caring for Children Model

Marland (in Lefrancois, 1997:388-90) advocates that caring for children, setting rules, giving legitimate praise, using humour, and shaping the learning environment helps to maintain discipline in the classroom.

A genuine interest in the learners by learning their names and accessing relevant information via conversations and records about them, demonstrates that a teacher cares about them. The interest and care shown by the teacher is reciprocated by the learner which enhances a positive teaching and learning environment. Praising learners bolsters their self-esteem and encourages compliance in the classroom. Gregory and Ripski (2008:339) describe this need that adolescents seek as an "affiliative need for connection with adults". Learners are generally cooperative if they regard their teachers as trustworthy and legitimate authority figures.

The use of humour is an effective strategy to defuse potentially explosive situations provided that it is used skilfully and is not demeaning to the learner. Teachers who create personalised, warm and friendly classroom environments prevent the scope for learner indiscipline because the learners feel accepted and capable in the company of the teacher.

Classroom rules, according to Marland (in Lefrancois, 1997:389), should not be rigid and absolute but relative to the teacher's expectations, the situation and the learner. Rules guide

learners in respect of the acceptable standards of behaviour in the classroom and have to be interpreted as expectations of positive behaviour, and not a list of "do nots" (Landsberg et al.,2005:457). Rules should be short, concise and clearly stated.

Routines are procedures that learners must follow to foster order in the classroom. Weinstein and Mignano (in Woolfolk, 2006:449) recommend that teachers establish routines for administrative tasks (marking the register, collecting forms), learner movement (entering or leaving the classroom), housekeeping (opening windows, cleaning the board), concluding lessons (collecting assignments or homework), interacting with the teacher (seeking help, asking permission to leave the room), and talking among the learners (group discussions, assisting peers). Routines must be consistently and regularly applied until they become automatic (Landsberg et al.,2005:458).

2.8.2   Reactive disciplinary measures

2.8.2.1   *Disciplinary measures for minor offences*`

According to Maphosa and Mammen (2011:146), talking to learners and verbal reprimands are perceived as effective disciplinary strategies by the learners. Despite corporal punishment being banned at schools, it is still regarded as being effective. Other disciplinary strategies that teachers use with learners are demotion from leadership positions, manual tasks, menial tasks, kneeling on the floor, the denial of privileges, sending the learners out of the class, ignoring the learners, insulting them and not marking their work.

Woolfolk (2006:452) recommends the following disciplinary strategy, namely the expression of disappointment (learners who respect their teachers may regret their actions and be deterred from misbehaving if they acknowledge they have disappointed the teacher). Other strategies include exclusion from a group, written reflections on the disciplinary problem, visits to the principal's office, and contact with parents.

2.8.2.2   Disciplinary measures for major offences

Maphosa and Mammen (2011:146) reported guidance and counselling, stress and anger management techniques, talking to the learners, referral to psychologists, demotion, detention suspension, manual labour, expulsion, community service, and transferring as suitable disciplinary measures for major offences. The procedures for suspension and expulsion are contained in the school's Code of Conduct, and are legislated in the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC, 2003d:7).

2.9   TWO INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Intervention programmes are usually structured initiatives that focus on long-term solutions to problems. The following two intervention programmes appear encouraging and implementable within the South African school environment.

2.9.1   The Behaviour Education Programme (BEP)

The Behaviour Education Programme (BEP) emanated from a three-tiered model of prevention and intervention that was recommended by the United States Public Health Service (Kunsch, McCurdy & Reibstein, 2007:12).

The first tier involves universal support systems aimed at promoting pro-social behaviour across the education system. The second tier focuses on the development of selected interventions for the at-risk learners, preventing them from developing more serious and chronic patterns of anti-social behaviour. The third tier is focused on support for learners who present serious and chronic patterns of anti-social behaviour. BEP forms part of the third tier.

BEP is a check-in-check-out programme that tracks a learner's behaviour throughout the day. At the beginning of the day the learner reports to a head-teacher and discusses the goals the learner wishes to accomplish for the day. This may include to be respectful, to be punctual, and to submit homework. The goals with a numeric rating system are presented on a card, for

example:0 ="did not meet expectation"; 1 ="met some expectations"; 2 ="met all expectations". At the end of each lesson the card is completed by the subject teacher. The learner presents the card to the head-teacher at the end of the day. The rating is tallied and a reward is earned if 80%of the goals have been achieved. The card is sent home for the parents' signature. Daily points are graphed and discussed bi-weekly by a behaviour support team comprising of teachers, parents, psychologists and social care workers. Appropriate measures are discussed for learners not showing progress, and conforming learners are gradually transitioned of the intervention programme (Kunsch et al.,2007:13)

The strength of this programme lies in its emphasis on self-discipline. The learners are accountable for their own behavioural expectations and accomplishments that must be sustained throughout the day. This programme eventually leads to the modification of inappropriate behaviour.

2.9.2   Teacher Assistance Team (TAT)

The Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) is a teacher-support system that was developed in 1979 by Chalfant, Pysh and Moultrie (in Hales, 1990:8). It emanated from a pre-referral intervention strategy that was aimed at rendering immediate informal assistance to teachers and as a screening mechanism for learners that needed to be referred for further evaluation. The team comprises three elected teachers who have to demonstrate expertise in problem-solving and the understanding of effective teaching, learner development and behaviour-management. It is essential that the teachers understand the needs and background of their learners so that appropriate solutions may be sought.

Learners exhibiting learning or behavioural problems are referred to the T.A.T. by the class teacher or the parent. The team then facilitates a meeting with the referring teacher or parent and the learner. Problems, solutions and action plans are discussed at this forum. The team evaluates the effectiveness of the proposed interventions through regular follow-up meetings, and makes recommendations where necessary (Hales, 1990:8).

The strength of this programme is that teachers find solutions among their peers on a daily basis within the school. Such programmes foster whole-school development and better staff relationships because the teachers experiencing disciplinary difficulties do not feel isolated.

2.10 STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER WELL-BEING

Learner misbehaviour reportedly causes high levels of professional stress and personal distress in teachers (Clunies-Rosset al.,2008:695). It is therefore imperative that teachers find strategies that will minimise the stress caused by factors beyond their control.

2.10.1 Emotional-social competences that promote teacher well-being

Teachers are guided by their personalities and emotional-social competences to maintain efficiency and well-being (Van Wyk, 2006:76-81). A sense of *empathy* allows teachers to understand the contextual factors within which learners misbehave. Self-confident teachers are self-tolerant and are more compassionate towards the learners.

Teachers who display *self-awareness* are aware of, recognise and understand their own emotions (Van Wyk, 2006:77). It is imperative that teachers reflect on their own emotions so that they may respond appropriately to a situation. *Optimism* is demonstrated by remaining positive in the face of adversity and being hopeful within the parameters of reality.

Teachers who adjust or replace their unreal or unreasonable aims through *reality-testing* avoid disappointment and disillusionment. Being sensitive to the needs of the learners is regarded as a *social responsibility* hat enhances the teacher-learner relationship which promotes teacher well-being. Teacher *assertiveness* is also a vital emotional-social competency in preventing disciplinary problems in the classroom. Teachers who create and maintain definite rules and boundaries rarely experience indiscipline. It is also important that the teachers exercise *flexibility* when implementing rules and setting goals so that tension may be averted if expectations are not met. Equally important is *impulse control* because it enhances the teachers' abilities to remain calm, patient and organised. The teachers may maintain their well-being if they are able to

withstand challenges and stressful situations positively. This competency is termed *stress tolerance* and is developed by being flexible, optimistic and by possessing a high self-regard.

The emotional-social competencies that have a strong correlation with teacher well-being are thus **a**ssertiveness, effective stress management, empathy, efficient problem-solving and stress tolerance.

2.10.2   Discarding the 'shoulds'

Teachers who hold on to idealistic views of how learners *should* behave will experience difficulty in finding contentment in their professional lives (Porter, 2000:85). The teachers are encouraged to dispute their dysfunctional beliefs and to instead focus on identifying their own feelings and trigger-factors that contribute to the disciplinary problem. For example, some teachers may hold on dogmatically to the belief that all learners should stop talking as soon as a teacher enters the classroom because they should respect a teacher's presence. Such teachers may become infuriated when learners continue talking whilst the teacher is waiting to be greeted.

The teachers' fury is the result of their own beliefs of how learners should behave, based perhaps on their own experiences as learners. Practising self-talk on how the teachers will respond when presented with problematic learners will help the teachers to regulate their discontent when the learners do not behave in the manner they think the learners should. When the teachers discard their idealistic notions of how they think the learners should behave their expectations would be more realistic.

2.10.3   Remaining calm during a potentially explosive encounter

Woolfolk (2004:421) provides the following suggestions on how to handle a potentially explosive situation:

- Approach the problem situation slowly and deliberately.
- Speak privately, calmly and in a low tone of voice.
- Remain still -- avoid pointing and gesturing.
- Keep a reasonable distance from the learner.
- Address the learner by name and speak respectfully.
- Maintain eye-contact.
- State the problem behaviour briefly -- avoid long-worded statements and nagging.
- Remain focused on the main problem and delay addressing lesser problems.
- Avoid a power-struggle -- do not engage in a "I won't, you will argument".
- Inform the learner of the expected behaviour and the consequences. Allow the learner to make a decision and retreat from the situation temporarily. If the learner does not choose the appropriate behaviour, follow through with the consequence.

2.10.4   Religious, spiritual, and/or mystical experiences (RSME)

Stanley's (2011:51) study on how teachers in a school for learners with emotional and behavioural problems in the United States managed their work-related stress revealed encouraging findings for all teachers. The learners at the school displayed atypical behaviour and were among the most violent in the country, with some being incarcerated for murder and other violent crimes. Despite threats to their lives and being physically attacked, the teachers appeared to be connected to their learners. Teachers with strong efficacy faced their challenges by engaging in problem-solving behaviours such as deep breathing and other exercises, going for long drives, and taking time for prayer and the family, Pantheism, meditation, martial arts, church attendance, hiking and camping (Stanley, 2011:52). Three techniques that were particularly effective for the teachers were prayer, humour and rational detachment.

- Prayer, whilst commonly associated with religion, is inclusive of meditation practices which are not religiously aligned. Whether attending a place of worship or engaging in silent prayer, the therapeutic effect of prayer in alleviating anxiety and fostering connectedness to learners is notable.

- Humour is a tool that can be used to diffuse potentially explosive situations. By laughing off a situation, both the teacher and the learner divert from the anger and develop healthier relationships. The successful use of humour is dependent on learner-acceptance and professional rational detachment (Stanley, 2011:54).

- When teachers step back from a situation and rationalise that they should not take what was said personally, they detach themselves psychologically from the stressful emotions that are evoked. Professional rational detachment is paradoxically a method used to connect with learners, and is not dependent on their acceptance. Maintaining emotional distance is effective when the learners are rude to the teachers. The teachers are able to look past the negative behaviour, reduce the emotional hurt, and focus on the other learners in the class (Stanley, 2011:55).

### 2.10.5	Sources of support

Teachers who have a supportive network generally manage stressful situations better. Van Wyk (2006:75) states that support from learners, parents, colleagues, families, associations, organisations and the church enhances the wellness of teachers. They afford the teachers an opportunity to unpack or unload their difficulties at the end of the day without fear of being judged.

### 2.11	SUMMARY

In Chapter 2 a literature review of factors related to learner discipline was presented. The Bar-On Model of emotional-social intelligence was detailed, and reasons for its choice for the study were indicated. An extensive literature review on the causes of disciplinary problems and disciplinary measures was presented. The chapter concluded with brief suggestions on how teachers may foster and enhance teacher well-being.

An overview of the research design and data-collection methods to investigate the experiences of teachers encountering disciplinary problems will be presented in Chapter 3. The aim is to find ways of assisting the teachers to manage stress emanating from learner disciplinary problems by developing the emotional-social competences of the teachers.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA-COLLECTION

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of an explanation of the research design that was used in the empirical phase of this study. This phase refers to the methodological processes that were used to answer the main research question, namely: *How do teachers experience disciplinary problems in t a selected secondary school?* Thus, this chapter presents the research design, the data-collection methods and the processes of data analysis that were used. The ethical measures applied and the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness (validity and reliability) are also detailed in this chapter.

The main purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of teachers encountering disciplinary problems with particular focus on the emotional-social competencies needed for effective classroom management.

3.2   THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. According to Maxwell (2013:30), a qualitative approach enables researchers to understand the events, situations, experiences and actions of the participants involved in the study. It is also allows the researcher to understand the particular contexts and processes within which the participants act. The events, situations, contexts and processes of disciplinary problems experienced by teachers and their consequent actions form the focal point of this study.

The need to encapsulate the essence of the teachers' experiences of disciplinary problems favoured a phenomenological research design. Grbich (2013:92) postulates that the essence of an experience can be understood through essential or imaginative intuition involving interaction

between a researcher and participants. The core focus of phenomenology is the 'lived experience' of the participant in relation to the phenomenon being studied (Liamputtong,2013:8). The manner how the participant thinks about the experience forms the essence of how the consciousness is experienced. The essence of how teachers think about disciplinary problems and how they consciously experience them underpins this study.

The data gathered from this study may enhance the knowledge and understanding of the emotional-social competencies of teachers that could assist in the development of strategies to deal with school disciplinary problems.

3.3 ETHICAL MEASURES

A discussion of the ethical measures undertaken in this empirical investigation follows.

3.3.1 Informed consent

Informed consent refers to the participant's voluntary participation in the empirical investigation after understanding the potential risks and benefits of the study (Tracy, 2013:89). The informed consent in this study was attained by informing the participants in respect of the following:

- The empirical investigation was being undertaken by a postgraduate master's student in the field of Education.
- The procedures of the research.
- The potential risks and benefits of the research.
- The participant's voluntary participation.
- The procedure for ensuring the confidentiality of the study.

The participants thus made an informed decision to voluntarily participate in the study after all the details were fully understood. They signed an assent form to indicate their willingness to participate (see Appendix D). Permission to conduct the research was also sought from the KwaZulu-Natal DoE (see Appendix A), as well as the principal of the school where the participants were interviewed (see Appendix C).

3.3.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality is regarded as the cornerstones of academic research (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis,2011:545). Huberman, Miles and Saldana (2014:63) refer to *confidentiality* as the agreement that is reached between the researcher and the participant as to what may be done with the data. They refer to *anonymity* as the absence of identifiers in the study. The aim of confidentiality is to conceal the true identity of the participants and not reveal their views to others in a way that they could be identified (Liamputtong, 2013:41). The participants in this study were assured of anonymity and confidentiality by ensuring that their identities and the name of the school where the study was conducted were not mentioned. Instead, code names/pseudonyms for both the participants and the school were used.

3.3.3 Avoidance of deception and privacy

Deception in empirical studies arises when the research is conducted covertly, or when a false role, name or identity is assumed, or when the participants are deliberately mislead (Neuman, 2003:397). Walizer and Wienir (1978:161) state that researchers must avoid such deception by ensuring that the participants maintain their self-respect throughout the empirical study. Feelings of embarrassment, remorse and depression must be considered whilst the privacy of the participants is respected.

All aspects of this empirical study were thoroughly explained to the participants, thereby eliminating any deception by the researcher. All the interviews with the participants were preceded by an explanation of the agreement of informed consent. Despite signing the agreement, the participants were offered the option of refusing to answer a question or disengaging from the study. The participants were also duly informed when and why the School Discipline Record book was consulted. The privacy of the participants was also assured.

3.3.4   The competence of the researcher

If research is to be considered as worthy and beneficial, it is essential that the researcher has the necessary skills and the guidance from supervisors to conduct the empirical study competently.(Harding, 2013:25). Strydom (2002:69) adds that the researcher must include the reasons for the study as well as the ethical considerations to be honoured in the research proposal.

This research study was undertaken with the guidance of a supervisor assigned by the registered university. My skills in academic writing and the search for literature relating to the phenomenon being studied were developed by means of the extensive reading of textbooks and electronic articles.

3.4   MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:324),*trustworthiness* in qualitative research refers to "the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world". Lincoln and Cuba (in De Vos,2002:351) refer to *trustworthiness* as the "truth value" of the study, and propose four constructs in this regard,namely truth value (credibility), applicability (transferability), consistency (dependability) and neutrality (confirmability). These four measures to establish the trustworthiness of this qualitative study are explained below.

3.4.1   Truth value (credibility)

Credibility is a term that is used to authenticate what the participants say, and the representation of these viewpoints by the researcher (Liamputtong, 2013:25). It is comparable to the internal validity of quantitative research because it is used to ascertain whether the research is genuine, reliable and whether the findings can be trusted. According to Chilisa (in Liamputtong, 2013:25), research evidence is considered to be credible if it adequately represents the multiple realities presented by the participants. When the descriptions and interpretations of these multiple

realities by the researcher are immediately identifiable by the participants, the collated data is deemed to be accurate and adequate.

Two methods of establishing credibility, as espoused by Saldana (2011:135) and used in this study, are the citation of key scholars in the related field of study, and member-checking (the corroboration of the data with the participants).

3.4.2   Applicability (transferability)

Transferability refers to the generalisability of the study, which seeks to correlate the degree to which the research findings of the study may be applied to other individuals or groups, contexts, or settings (Liamputtong, 2013:25). It is comparable to the concept of external validity as used in quantitative research.

Huberman et al.(2014:101) state that the transferability of the findings of a study to other similar settings transcends the particular to understand the general and deepens the understanding and explanation of the phenomenon being studied.

Chilisa (in Liamputtong, 2013:25) asserts that careful sampling strategies and thick descriptions of the research setting are two procedures that enhance transferability. Both these procedures of the enhancement of transferability were used in this study.

3.4.3   Consistency (dependability)

Dependability refers to whether the descriptions and interpretations of the research findings 'fit' the data from which they were derived. It can be compared to reliability in quantitative research (Liamputtong, 2013:26). If the research process of a study is logical, traceable and clearly documented, the dependability of the study is enhanced. When researchers detail their choice of methodology and methods of data-collection and provide coherent linkages between the data and the reported findings, they present an audit trail that allows for the examination of the adequacy of the research process. *Dependability* may be loosely referred to as an 'audit trail' of a research

study. Thick descriptions of the all the research processes involved in this study are detailed and logically documented to enhance its dependability.

3.4.4   Neutrality (confirmability)

Neutrality is a term that is comparable to objectivity in quantitative research (Liamputtong, 2013:26). It attempts to present the findings and interpretations of the study without the influence of the researcher's bias, motivations, interests or perspectives. According to Lincoln and Cuba (in Liamputtong, 2013:26), neutrality is seen as the "degree to which findings are determined by the respondents and conditions of the inquiry".

The neutrality in this study is enhanced by he strategies of reflexivity and auditing. Despite endeavouring to remain objective in the presentation of the research findings and interpretations of the study, researchers inevitably share their own positions and perspectives. This reflexivity of the researcher's experiences, beliefs and personal history makes research findings more credible, and must be acknowledged (Liamputtong, 2013:26). All aspects of reflexivity and auditing have been adhered to in this study.

3.4.5   Tactics to ensure trustworthiness

The following strategies were used to ensure trustworthiness in this study:
- The participants who regularly experienced disciplinary problems were purposively identified from the School Discipline Book so that information-rich data could be attained during the interviews.
- A tape recorder was used to capture a verbatim transcription of each interview.
- The findings were presented to the interviewees to comment on their accuracy.

The following strategies, suggested by Gibbs (in Cresswell, 2009:190) to enhance the trustworthiness of a study, were also used:
- Checking transcripts for errors.

- Ensuring there is no drift in the definition and meaning of codes by constantly comparing the data with the codes.

3.5   DATA-COLLECTION

3.5.1   Sampling

The primary purpose of sampling, according to Neuman (2003:211), is to collect specific cases, events, or actions that can clarify and deepen the understanding of the phenomenon being studied.. As stated in Chapter 1, the aim of this research was to gain an understanding of how teachers experience disciplinary problems in the classroom. Purposive sampling was chosen for this study because it provided the opportunity to choose cases that were especially informative and suitable for in-depth investigation.

When choosing the participants, I was guided by my experience as a school manager. Undisciplined learners are regularly sent to school managers when they present unmanageable classroom behaviour. A range of disciplinary problems are experienced across all the grades in the relevant secondary school. However, it was observed that some teachers sent learners to the office more often than others.

I chose two teachers per grade, from Grade 8 to 12, who frequently experienced disciplinary problems. This information was gleaned from the School Discipline Book where the disciplinary problems are recorded. I also purposefully chose two other teachers who were knowledgeable and interested in the issue. The participants were reflective of both the junior and senior teaching staff, as well as the demographic composition of the school.

The school is a government school that is situated in a predominately Indian residential area. It has a multicultural learner population drawn from the immediate Indian residential area as well as the neighbouring Coloured and Black township. The learner population encompasses affluent, middle-class and indigent socio-economic circumstances.

The gatekeepers (Cresswell, 2009:178) of this study were the KwaZulu-Natal DoE and the principal who allowed access to the site, and permitted the research to be done.

3.5.2   The researcher as instrument

In a qualitative study the researcher serves as a measuring instrument and analyst (Tuckman, 1994:369). As an instrument in this research, I analysed the responses given by the participants into recurrent themes pertaining to how teachers experience disciplinary problems in the classroom. Saldana (2011:26) concedes that there are no standardised methods of data-analysis in qualitative research,but recommends that information should be organised and synthesised into a streamlined and coherent presentation.

As advised by Cresswell and Clark (2007:31), I positioned myself in the research, reported my biases and identified how my experiences and background shaped the interpretations in this study. My professional values as a school manager and the Bar-On Model of emotional-social competences underpinned the coding and theme-development processes in the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data.

I constantly consulted with my supervisor and read relevant research publications to enhance my skills as a competent researcher. Neuman (2003:375) states that as an instrument to measure field-data, the researcher should be alert, sensitive and disciplined in recording the data. He adds that researchers should also include their insight in the subject and their feelings.

3.5.3 Data-collection methods

The following data-collection methods were used in this study:

3.5.3.1 Documents

Using documents as a data-collection method is often advantageous because it is easily accessible and saves the researcher time (Harding, 2013:21). This method was used to identify the participants in this study because the teachers were chosen from the school at which I teach, and were hence easily accessible. The document consulted was the School Discipline Book which is used to record the referrals of the learners that the teachers make to the grade coordinator. It is a carbonised book that records the referrals in triplicate and states the offending behaviour for which the learner is referred. The respective books for Grades 8 to 12 were perused to choose the sample (two teachers per grade who made the most frequent referrals).

3.5.3.2 Interviews

Researchers undertaking a qualitative study may choose interviews as a primary data-collection method because of its flexibility and adaptability, as well as the opportunity to ask probing questions to understand the participants' feelings and emotions (Harding, 2013:22). It facilitates a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. I chose interviews as a primary data-collection source because I wished to engage with the participants in a conversational manner that was conducive to obtaining information-rich data.

Semi-structured interviews comprising defined questions around how teachers experience disciplinary problems were used during the empirical study. This choice was suitable because it afforded the researcher the opportunity of the probing of questions which often yields more comprehensive information from the participants.

3.5.3.3   The interview guide

An interview guide is intended to stimulate discussion around the topic being studied. It suggests ways of approaching the topic, and also assists the researcher to remember the points to be covered (Mathews & Ross, 2010:227). The interviewer assumes the role of a listener and reflector and cedes control of the discussion to the interviewee (Tracy, 2013:139).

My choice of questions was shaped by the parameters within which I wished to explore the topic. My particular focus was on the teachers' personal experience of disciplinary problems in the classroom. The interview guide was structured to guide the teachers into presenting their personal accounts and perceptions of this phenomenon.

The questions were categorised around the main aspects of disciplinary problems that were discussed in the literature review (see Chapter 2). The interview guide comprised the following questions:

- Describe the common disciplinary problems in your classroom.
- What in your opinion, leads to the learners misbehaving in your class?
- Describe your worst experience of a learner misbehaving in your class.
- How do you feel when learners misbehave in your class?
- How does an encounter with an undisciplined learner at school affect you when you are at home?
- How do you relax after a particularly bad encounter with a learner?
- What disciplinary measures do you use when learners misbehave in your class?
- How do you think the school management can assist teachers who experience disciplinary problems?
- How do think the DoE can assist teachers who experience difficulties in the classroom?
- Anything else you would like to add?

3.5.3.4   Field-notes

I kept field-notes throughout the empirical stage of the study because, as Tracy (2013:116) states, it allows for the researcher to re-enter the context and to revisit the relationships after a site visit. Detailed notes of the participants' tone of voice, facial expressions, body language and comments during and after the interviews added richness and thickness to the information during the analysis.

3.6   METHODS OF DATA-STORAGE

All the data were stored either digitally, electronically or as a hard copy. After obtaining permission, each interview was audio-recorded, uploaded to a computer hard drive, copied and stored in a labelled CD, and on multiple hard drives. Each interview was transcribed immediately and stored electronically, together with the field notes.

All the documentation in respect of requests, permission and consent of participation were filed as hard copies. Printed copies of the transcriptions and additional notes made during the analysis were also stored as hard copies.

3.7   DATA-ANALYSIS

According to Barritt (in Leedy, 1997:162), the task of a researcher in a phenomenological case study is to "try to go to the heart of the matter by looking for themes that lie concealed in the unexamined events of everyday life …to find meaningful, shared themes in different people's descriptions of common experiences". In this study I endeavoured to accurately extract and describe the emergent themes and patterns from the data, and presented the analysis as a narrative.

The analytic strategies used are indicated below.

3.7.2 Coding

Each of the interview questions became a category, for example, "*common disciplinary problems in the classroom*" was one category, while "*causes of learner misbehaviour in class*" was another. The categories were further divided into sub-categories, for example, the category "*common disciplinary problems in the classroom* "was sub-divided into "*disruption of learning*", "*defiance and disrespect towards teaching*", and "*teacher-targeted bullying*".

The transcribed data from the interviews were read several times to elicit words and phrases that described a particular aspect of the participants' experiences of disciplinary problems that correlated with the relevant literature..Thus, the analysis of the data was deductive (determined by the interview questions), and in this regard adopted a top-down approach (categories were dictated by the literature review and interview guide). However, within each category, a bottom-up approach was followed to identify sub-categories.

3.7.2 Memos

I kept a diary in which I regularly wrote memos during the analysis of the data. Information that had to be revisited and ideas on how I wanted the analysis to unfold were recorded as they emerged. This strategy assisted in shaping the approaches I used to analyse the data.

3.7.3 Checking for reliability

I checked the transcriptions of the recorded interviews several times for mistakes and omissions . I ensured that there was no drift in the coding by constantly comparing the raw data with the codes and referring to the research questions, as suggested by Creswell (2009:190). All aspects to foster inter-coder agreement were overseen by my research supervisor.

3.8   SUMMARY

A discussion of the empirical phase of the study was presented in this chapter. A description of the basic research design, the ethical measures used to ensure trustworthiness and a description of the data-collection and analysis was included.

The findings of the empirical investigation will be presented in the next chapter. The findings will be discussed and interpreted in the light of the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary research question of this study is, namely, *How do the teachers experience learner discipline problems in a selected secondary school?* The aim of the study was hence to explore the emotional and social impact of disciplinary problems on the well-being of the teacher, and to empirically investigate the causes of disciplinary problems, according to the teachers (see section 2.6). The research study was undertaken to also explore possible solutions to deal with misbehaviour in the classroom.

The data-collection strategies and methodology were explained in Chapter 3. The results of the empirical investigation are presented and discussed in this chapter. A brief summary concludes this chapter.

4.2 REALISATION OF THE SAMPLE

Purposive sampling was used in this research study. Twelve participants were selected. I purposefully selected 10 teachers who experienced disciplinary problems and two other teachers who were knowledgeable and interested in the issue. The 10 participants who experienced disciplinary problems were from all five grades at the school. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the sample.

Table 4.1   Demographic background of the participants who experienced disciplinary problems

TEACHER	Race	Gender	Experience (years)	Number of years at present school (years)	Problematic grade
1	I	F	4 months	4 months	8
2	I	F	8	5	8
3	I	F	5	3	9
4	B	F	1	1	9
5	I	F	12	12	10
6	I	F	22	20	10
7	I	M	10	10	11
8	I	F	7	7	11
9	B	M	15	14	12
10	I	F	17	11	12

I = Indian; B = Black; M = Male; F = Female

The demographic details of the two participants who did not experience disciplinary problems are illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2   Demographic background of the participants who did not experience disciplinary problems

Teacher	Race	Gender	Experience (years)	Number of years at present school
11	I	F	23	20
12	I	F	30	25

Twelve individual semi-structured interviews were conducted. All 12the participants agreed to a verbatim transcription of their responses. The codes that will be used to indicate the demographic details of the participants who were quoted verbatim are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3   Demographic details and codes of the participants

Demographic details	Code
Male	M
Female	F
Teacher who experiences problems	P
Teacher who does not experience problems	N
Level 1 teacher	T
Head of Department	H

During the discussion of the data, the number of years' experience of the participants will be indicated after the corresponding codes of the participants 'quotes.

4.3 CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES

The main research questions (see section 3.5.3.3) will form the categories under which the empirical research will be discussed. The emergent responses of the participants will further be divided into sub-categories, as discussed in the relevant literature review (see sections 2.3.3; 2.4; 2.6; 2.8). The findings will be substantiated by quoting the salient points of the participants' responses verbatim, and by referring to the corresponding relevant literature.

The following table (Table 4.4) represents the categories and sub-categories that will be discussed.

Table 4.4   Categories and sub-categories of responses

Category	Sub-category
Research question*: How do teachers experience learner disciplinary problems in a selected secondary school?*	
Category	**Sub-category**
Common disciplinary problems	- Disruption of learning - Defiance and disrespect towards teaching - Teacher-targeted bullying
Worst experiences of ill-discipline	- Disrespect, arguments and arrogance - Personal attacks
Causes of disciplinary problems	- Microsystems of disciplinary problems *The learner* *The family* *Peer influence* *The school* *Teacher factors* - Meso-systems of disciplinary problems - The exo-system of disciplinary problems - The macro-system of disciplinary problems *Culture of disrespect* *Culture of ill-discipline* *Culture of overemphasis on rights*
Impact of disciplinary problems	- Intrapersonal EI *Assertiveness* *Self-regard* *Self-awareness,* *Self-actualisation* - Interpersonal EI *Empathy* *Social responsibility* *Interpersonal relationships* - Stress-management EI *Stress-tolerance* *Impulse-control* - Adaptability EI - General mood
Common disciplinary measures	- Proactive disciplinary measures - Reactive disciplinary measures
Ways how the teachers de-stress	
Role of the School Management Team (SMT)	
Role of the Department of Education	- Criticisms - Possible departmental initiatives *Implementable laws and policies regarding* *alternatives to corporal punishment* *School counsellors* *Workshops* *Establishing discipline committees at schools* *Task-teams and school-raids* *Changing the perception of teachers in the media*

4.4 COMMON DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

Any action by the learner that interrupts or detracts from the process of teaching and learning is viewed as a disciplinary problem by the teacher (see section 2.4). The participants were asked to list the common disciplinary problems that occur in their classrooms. Their responses were clustered into three sub-categories, namely disruption of learning; defiance and disrespect towards teaching; and teacher-targeted bullying.

4.4.1 Disruption of learning

When learners misbehave during a lesson, the focus is often diverted from the lesson to the unruly behaviour, which disrupts the process of teaching and learning. The rippling effect of excessive talking illustrates how learning is interrupted:

> *The learners' excessive talking and the fact that they don't focus on their work makes them get distracted easily, and then they want to distract other learners … which makes it very difficult to get teaching and learning done. [FTP, 4 months]*

Five of the ten teachers cited incomplete homework or record books as common discipline problems. When homework is being reviewed defaulting learners generally engage in disruptive behaviour, which frustrates both the learners and the teacher.

Late-coming was also cited as a common problem:

> [Late-coming] *impacts on the teaching and learning in the classroom in terms of time being lost … in terms of academic work being conducted in the given time frame … to have these learners settled down and to get into the serious business of work. It* [late-coming] *does take up some time and that impacts on the discipline … generally at the start of the lesson.   [FTP, 17 years]*

Other common disruptive behaviour reported by teachers included back-chatting, arguing, a lack of concentration, bantering, and eating in class. Rossouw (2003:413) indicates that disruptive behaviour hampers the process of teaching and learning, and impedes successful education.

4.4.2   Defiance and disrespect towards teaching

Learners who display disrespect and defiance towards the structures that govern the process of teaching and learning make teaching difficult. For example:

> *They do not have good manners. They have very poor work ethics or no ethics at all. Some of them do not have books to work… or refuse to adhere to any rules of the school. They just refuse to listen. They are quite disruptive. They don't allow me to teach them and that I find difficult. [FTP, 12 years]*

It is extremely difficult for teachers to engage with learners who display a flagrant disrespect for rules and structures that are intended to create a productive teaching and learning environment. Much time is spent in trying to maintain order and discipline in the classroom which detracts from the core responsibility of teaching and learning.

4.4.3   Teacher-targeted bullying

Teacher-targeted bullying appears to be a serious issue in schools. Learners may deliberately attack a teacher either physically or emotionally to undermine the confidence of the teacher, as was also found by De Wet (2006:63). Three teachers in this study reported that they had been bullied by learners. A female teacher was subjected to a rumour initiated by two grade eight learners that she had "slept with" a fellow male teacher on the staff. A male teacher reported being physically assaulted by a learner who was refused permission to leave the classroom. Another teacher reported feeling threatened when a learner became "restless… aggressive … vulgar and abusive" when questioned about the quality of his work.

Pervin and Turner (1998:4) list making personal comments about teachers, as well as actual physical assaults on teachers as teacher-targeted bullying. They also cited persistent, intentional and vigorous abuse of the teacher as teacher-targeted bullying. De Wet (2010:191) concurred with Pervin and Turner (1998:4) by identifying the spreading of rumours as an example of teacher-targeted bullying. Evidently, teachers feel threatened and undermined when learners

personally attack them. These behaviours erode the confidence of the teacher and result in tension in the classroom.

4.5   WORST EXPERIENCES OF ILL-DISCIPLINE

Given the volatile climate that often prevails in undisciplined classrooms, it is expected that teachers may experience cases of extreme ill-discipline from learners. The participants were asked to relate their worst encounter with an undisciplined learner. One participant indicated that learners engaging in a fight in her presence as her worst experience. In most cases disrespect, arguments and arrogance were regarded as examples of the teachers' worst experiences.

4.5.1   Disrespect, arguments and arrogance

The teachers in this study cited arguments and arrogance as common forms of disrespect. Three participants reported that they were provoked into an argument which dissipated into a "verbal contest" between them and the learner. The following excerpts illustrate how disrespect for the teacher degenerated into "ugly" arguments in the classroom:

> *He didn't do the homework and when I asked for the reason, he said to me:'What good is this going to do, if I do the homework? It's not going to help me. So, I'd rather take this time and do some other homework… homework that will help me'. It ended in an argument …to the point where I felt either he had to leave the classroom or I had to leave the classroom… or it could become ugly. And eventually I told him:'You need a time out… please leave my room', but it was very upsetting because … the rest of the learners were sitting there… I could feel almost … they were goading him on. …. That was unsettling for me.   [FHN, 23 years]*

> *He stood and argued with me. Then he was very arrogant about it and … he started shouting to a point that I had to tell him:'Please leave! Leave the classroom!' I cannot handle that argument. [FTP, 7 years]*

> *I caught this kid eating in class …in spite of him being right under my nose…*
> *which to me was blatant disrespect…I reprimanded him … I asked him to leave*
> *the class because he didn't stop eating …and he just wouldn't…and then it*
> *became like a contest between me and the child …and there's all the class*
> *watching to see where this was going to go and it became very ugly.   [FTN,*
> *30 years]*

Another teacher related her interactions with a particularly arrogant learner as being her worst experience of indiscipline:

> *It was the way he spoke to you, the way he answered, and his entire attitude …. It*
> *was like "I want to be here, I have the right to be here but I can do what I want to*
> *do".   [FTP, 12 years]*

A participant reported feeling very "demeaned" when a so-called rich learner demonstrated an attitude, and spoke in the tone that made him feel "much lower*"* than the learner. He reasoned that this was his worst experience because "when someone attacks you mentally, it's worse than physically*".* A participant who was told to "Voertsek*"* when a learner was unhappy with a test mark, echoed a similar sentiment and experienced the learner's comment as "very disrespectful*".*

The participants were very vocal about feeling violated when the learners displayed disrespect and arrogance. It was therefore not surprising that most of the teachers viewed disrespect as their worst experience of learner indiscipline.

4.5.2 Personal attacks

A teacher related an incident of being personally humiliated by a learner making derogatory comments about her as follows:

> *He says that I slept with Mr..! Now, Mr … is a teacher at our school, and that hurt me. It's a first time that I experienced something like this…and it was really… difficult for me. I think that was the worst thing that I've been through so far…with… behaviour…discipline… where a child spoke something like that. I cannot look at this child now… for him to be talking about me… thinking…it really disgusts me. [FTP, 8 years]*

The difficulty with which the teacher expressed herself epitomised the psychological impact of the learner's derogatory comments. The teacher appeared emotional and fought back tears when relating the incident. Another teacher who reported being hit by a learner spoke, contrastingly, very clinically about his encounter, perhaps not wanting to revisit the emotional experience of the incident:

> *When I was talking to an educator … the learner came to the educator and asked to go out… I told the learner: 'Can you go inside the class and sit down… I am still busy'. Without any notice, without even saying anything, the learner started hitting me. I will say that was the worst experience I have ever had. [MTP, 15 years]*

Such personal attacks on teachers are regarded as teacher-targeted bullying, where the learners deliberately seek to humiliate or physically hurt a teacher. The targeted teacher may choose to react or to respond (see section 2.3.6), depending on his or her own emotional and social competencies. De Wet (2010:39) asserts that victims of teacher-targeted bullying generally lose their passion and zest for the profession, and experience greater disciplinary problems in the classroom. Such teachers also experience difficulty in working collaboratively with their peers and the SMT.

4.6 CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

According to Bronfenbrenner's Model (in Landsberg et al., 2005:10) "a set of nested structures" consisting of the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system and macro-system (see section 2.6) collectively impact on a child's development. Disciplinary problems arise when the child experiences tension and deficiencies within and/or between these systems. Teachers are often exposed to the deviant behaviours that emanate from these dysfunctional systems.

The participants were asked what, in their opinion, caused learners to misbehave in their classrooms. Their responses were categorised according to the Bronfenbrenner multi-dimensional Ecological Model which focuses on the direct and indirect influences on a child's development (in Landsberg et al.,2005:10).

4.6.1 Mico-systems of disciplinary problems

4.6.1.1 The learner

Learners who display an "attitude" or "apathy" are difficult to teach. They often do not concentrate in class and engage in activities that disrupt the process of teaching and learning. These problems often stem from issues beyond the classroom, For example:

> *I notice some of them* [the learners] *may not give the 100% attention that I require…it goes back to their cognitive level or psychological problems that may affect them during the course of the day. At any given point they may become restless. [FTP, 17 years]*

Such learners often "act out" their frustrations by disturbing other learners and provoking the teacher. It confirms Lethoko et al.'s(2001:311) view that the lack of motivation to learn and an inability to concentrate in class are negative influences on the learning environment.

4.6.1.2   The family

The family is the primary micro-system in which a child is socialised. Many participants agreed that "a child with poor discipline comes with baggage from home" and that often "something was lacking" in the misbehaving child. Manifestations of ill-discipline in the classroom may be attributed to psychological problems prevalent in the learner's home environment. Strauss (2006:21) and Lethoko et al.(2001:312) agree that adverse family circumstances and non-supportive families expose children to fractious interpersonal relationships.

4.6.1.3   Peer influence

Rossouw (2003:425) and Gasa (2005:61) argue that peer influence among learners may result in the admiration for and the imitation of unruly behaviour, while Strauss (2006:22) contends that negative peer influences may force learners into gangs. These postulations were evident in respect of predominately boy-classes. A teacher said:

> *Boys in their groups tend to have those discipline problems ... where they see each other as* [unruly] *gangs of boys. [MTP, 10 years]*

The teacher elaborated that the boys engaged in bantering in the class which later "exploded" into "serious fights" when the boys were "free" or "unmanned on the grounds". The teacher also claimed that wealth was a divisive factor among peers:

> *Those boys that come from socially well backgrounds...the rich kids, as they're called...tend to be the ones that are most disliked. I had that situation where a fight arose from that. And the boys from poorer backgrounds tend to not like them... because the guy from the rich background acts like he is the boss ...and that has led to some serious fights. [MTP, 10 years]*

When learners misbehave in the classroom, there is peer pressure among the learners to emulate the disruptive learner. If the teacher ignores the misbehaviour, the teacher is thought of as being weak in terms of disciplining the learners in the class. This perception causes further disciplinary problems.

4.6.1.4   The school

Disciplinary problems at school are caused by a myriad of factors. These factors may be clustered into school-structure factors encompassing leadership, the class composition and the curriculum, and teacher-factors, including classroom management and person factors.

- *Leadership*

Mbatha (2008:22) and Lethoko et al.(2001:312) posit that ineffective school leadership and management impact on learner discipline. Interestingly, none of the participants in this study identified 'leadership' as a direct cause of disciplinary problems, but alluded to the perception of leaders that teachers are the cause of indiscipline in the classroom. For example:

> *It would be wonderful if school managers did not see a breakdown in discipline in the classroom as a direct fault of the teacher. I think very often managers look at it as an inability by the teacher to control the class. [FTP, 22 years]*

These sentiments are supported by Mokhele (2006:155), who argues that principals are often unsupportive of teachers who experience disciplinary problems. When the teachers seek assistance from the principal, they are regarded as ineffective classroom managers.

- *Class composition*

Overcrowded classrooms, a high learner-teacher ratio, and a lack of resources prevent teachers from offering individual and quality attention to the learners (Lethokoet al.,2001:312). Large classes are demanding, and restrict the teacher from being attentive to all of the learners all of the time:

> *A big problem is huge class sizes ... we can't be all over all the time. And that's where kids find the little loopholes to start doing the wrong things. [FHN, 23 years]*

Overcrowded classrooms also prevent the teachers from offering individual attention to problematic learners. One teacher commented that the DoE often advocates that the teacher should "call the child aside to counsel the child", but the large class sizes did not allow for this intervention:

> *When you've got 42 children in a class … there's just no time in that 47 minutes to call a child aside and leave 41 other children unattended. [FHN, 23 years]*

Mokhele (2006:154) agrees that it is difficult to establish relationships of trust in overcrowded classrooms. Misbehaviour often recurs in large classes because the teachers are unable to implement individual intervention strategies.

Thompson (2009:54) guards against the clustering of academically weak learners in one class because of the potential for misbehaviour. This assertion was substantiated by one participant:

> *The one class consists mainly of boys and they are considered miscreants of the school…they're just weak academically and I think because they cannot understand, they cannot concentrate… they just become disruptive.*
> *[FTP, 12 years]*

Interestingly, the teacher also asserted that the few "good learners" in the class also presented disciplinary problems:

> *Unfortunately, instead of helping the others change their attitude or…assist them in any way, they just climb on the bandwagon and there's a whole lot of chaos. I think the discipline issue here is because they are mixed in….they cannot fit.   [FTP,   12 years]*

One participant was of the opinion that predominately boy-classes also presented disciplinary problems:

> *There are no girls to tone them down. The discipline problems are much less in a boy-girl class". [MTP,10 years]*

Evidently, the composition of a class impacts on the inter-relationships between the teacher and the learner and among the learners. The class composition must therefore be acknowledged as a cause of disciplinary problems.

- *The curriculum*

Regarding the curriculum, the Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001:19) states that learner behavioural problems arise from a number of issues, including the content of the curriculum, the medium of instruction, and the time-frames for the completion of the curriculum. One participant elaborated that she was aware of the "learner's negative attitude to the subject*"* and would always *"*try to go out of (her) way to be creative and more innovative in the classroom". Despite her best efforts the learners remained apathetic to the subject and would misbehave whenever the opportunity arose. It was also reported that learners misbehaved because they lacked interest or because they were "struggling" with the subject. Mabitla (2006:31) posits that if the instructional materials, activities and the content of the curriculum do not reflect the interests of the learners, they may opt for disruptive behaviour.

4.6.1.5   Teacher factors

Seven of the ten participants initially responded hesitantly when questioned about the cause of misbehaviour in their classrooms. This hesitation may be related to the teachers' reluctance to be considered as contributory to the misbehaviour in the classroom, as the question was phrased: "What, in your opinion, causes learners to misbehave in *your* classroom*".* The participants were required to reflect on their own classrooms rather than to generalise. Their hesitancy in acknowledging accountability may also be attributed to the researcher being a manager at the school.

- *Lack of with-it-ness*

A teacher inadvertently admitted to being contributory to the misbehaviour in her classroom when she stated that learners "tend to chat while I'm teaching and I have my back towards them

and I'm writing on the board". *With-it-ness,* a feature of Kounin's (in (Lefrancois, 1997:391-393)Management Model, is a classroom management technique which describes a teacher's awareness of everything that happens in the classroom all of the time (see section 2.8.1.2). Learners who are prone to misbehaviour will seize the opportunity to act-out when the possibility exists that they cannot be identified by the teacher. Teachers who do not practice 'with-it-ness' may present opportunities for indiscipline in the classroom.

- *Inconsistency in applying rules*

Learners behave poorly when the teachers apply rules inconsistently (Strauss, 2006:21; Thompson, 2009:43). When a teacher issues a threat, it is imperative that he or she acts on it in order to be respected by the learner:

> *I normally warn them… I tell them there are going to be three warnings, [but] they go up to five before I take it up to management.*
>
> *There are times when I threaten them… for example, if they see me talking to my supervisor and I saw that child outside the breaks or whenever…I will point out to the child: 'Do you remember seeing me talking to so and so? That person is going to come visit us because I was complaining about you'. So, I try to threaten them in that way and they are quiet for a little while… if obviously that visit does not take place, they know you were simply threatening them. They don't take you seriously.[FTP, 12 years]*

The inconsistency in which the teacher acted on her warnings and the threats that did not materialise may be construed as contributory factors to indiscipline in the classroom. Such teachers are disrespected because the learners are aware that the teacher is unable to apply effective disciplinary measures in the classroom.

4.6.2 Meso-systems of disciplinary problems

Mbokodi et al. (2004:304) argue that the teachers regard the parents as not doing their share of the work. The teachers seek collaboration from the parents so that learner-teacher-parent relationships may be strengthened, and misbehaving learners may be assisted. However, one participant reported unequivocally that the parents sometimes do not collaborate with the school by defending their children's behaviour:

> *Many parents come to school and say that they were well-behaved at home. Obviously the parents either have a very poor understanding of what really goes on in the classroom or they're lying to us! But really, the parents seem to enjoy more discipline at home than we do in the classroom!   [FTP 22 years]*

Ndamani (2008:181) exposes the nature of fractious parent-child relationships further by stating that the parents sometimes condone poor discipline by perceiving their roles as being external to the school environment. Parents who are at odds with the school over discipline send mixed messages to their children. Poorly-behaved learners soon learn to play-off their parents against the school, and *vice versa*.

> *Some parents will tell learners their rights and they don't in fact tell them their responsibilities. Some children will have parents who tell them: 'If a teacher does this to you… you must come to me … I will go and sort the teacher out'.   [MTP, 15 years]*

This lack of collaboration between the home and the school presents fertile ground for learners to misbehave and to challenge the school authorities.

4.6.3   The exo-system of disciplinary problems

The exo-system encompasses relationships and interactions in the educational, social and political systems. Most participants echoed the sentiment that the DoE and society in general did not accord teachers the respect they deserved:

> *The whole perception of teachers needs to change. I don't think it's just the Department of Education, I think society at large does not seem to have any respect for teachers. So, I think that's the reason the kids are very, very   disrespectful towards educators.   [FTP, 22 years]*

One female participant also attributed learner misbehaviour to a "patriarchal society" where the boys were always "testing" teachers as females, and argued, "Female teachers just have a harder time with the male pupils". In this study sample, the majority of the teachers experiencing disciplinary problems in the school were females, and about 90% of the learners who presented the worst forms of ill-discipline were boys.

Three participants expressed the view that the negative portrayal of teachers in the media by the DoE reinforced the negative perceptions held by society. These negative perceptions of teachers that permeate into the classroom present challenges to both the teacher and the learner.

4.6.4   The macro-system of disciplinary problems

The macro-system of disciplinary problems that emerged in this study was related to a culture of disrespect, indiscipline and an over-emphasis of the legal rights of learners in the post-apartheid South African societal system.

4.6.4.1   Culture of disrespect

It is generally perceived in society that elders should be respected for their experience by the youth (Bernard 2003:19), but according to Rossouw (2003:416), the youth in post-apartheid South Africa has displayed increased arrogance towards adults, including parents and teachers. A participant with 30 years of teaching experience substantiated:

> *I'm a senior teacher… in terms of experience and age and as a female… I think being a mother…being 54 years old… you expect them to automatically respect you based on that. But… somehow they forget that… and sometimes… I think I'm older than their moms ….and they're showing me such blatant disrespect! [FTN, 30 years]*

One participant in the study related how disrespect in the classroom conflicted with his Zulu culture:

> *In our culture, a child is a child … someone who must respect the adult in any manner. But now, if a child is disrespectful, in a way it is humiliating for an adult. [MTP, 15 years]*

The blatant disrespect shown by misbehaving learners was also cited as the worst encounter of ill-discipline experienced by teachers. Unsurprisingly, teachers feel the need to be respected because they also serve maternally as guidance counsellors, caregivers, nurses and psychologists in the classroom (Ramawtar, 2011:7).

4.6.4.2   Culture of ill-discipline

Allen (2010:8) contends that misbehaviour leads to teacher-learner conflicts. Such conflicts cause undesirable interpersonal relationships between the learners and the teachers in the classroom. The participants reported that the learners argued, screamed and became aggressive when they attempted to discipline them. It was also reported that the learners displayed ill-discipline when asked to work individually, "They expect the teacher to spoon-feed them all the time", and when asked to work individually they refuse,and "find other things to keep them occupied". This culture of ill-discipline often degenerates into chaos in the classroom.

4.6.4.3   Culture of overemphasis on human rights

Klerk and Rens (2003:358) postulate that it is arguable as to whether all people in post-apartheid South Africa understand the responsibilities of having basic human rights. The teachers are constantly intimidated by misbehaving learners who claim an awareness of their rights when being disciplined. This overemphasis on rights by the youth exemplified "a huge power shift from the teacher to the learner" ,resulting in a power-play between the misbehaving learner and the teacher. For example:

> *They know you can't do anything… the child will normally take advantage of that because they know that even if they can provoke you… at the end of the day you are powerless to do them anything.   [MTP, 15 years]*

> *They know too much of their rights… but they forget about the consequences of acting out that right. I'm always seeing that as one of the major problems because every single time a child says: 'But it is my right to be here! You weren't right!'   [FTP, 1 year]*

It must, however, be noted that educating the youth about their rights and responsibilities falls within the ambit of the educational system. Ironically, it is the teachers who appear to be failing in teaching the learners about their responsibilities:

> *In Life Orientation, when we teach about human rights, I think that's where   things go wrong. When you teach about human rights … the learners always tend to focus on*

the fact that they have the right to education and they have the right not to be chased out of class. They get what their rights are but they don't take into consideration that we as educators also have rights ... and our rights must be respected too. So I think in terms of human rights ... we got it all wrong ... the way that we're teaching them is not really assisting them because we're not telling them about the actions after those rights!
        [FTP 1 year]

The learners' emphasis on their own rights and their disregard for the congruent responsibilities undoubtedly lets the tension escalate in the classroom when the learners misbehave. Misbehaving learners often flaunt their rights while the teachers appear hamstrung by the laws within which they must apply disciplinary measures.

4.7   THE IMPACT OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

In consideration of the main research question of this study, the focus of the impact of disciplinary problems is the teacher. The interview questions were purposefully phrased to elicit the emotional and social impact of learner ill-discipline experienced by the teacher at school and at home. The participants were asked to relate how they felt when the learners misbehave, and how the experience affected them when they were at home. Van Wyk (2006:46) contends that sometimes certain words and actions of the learners trigger negative reactions from teachers. According to Van Wyk (2006:45),the teachers who exhibit strong emotional and social competencies are able to manage themselves and their learners better.

The emotional and social impact of disciplinary problems as experienced by the participants will be discussed against the theoretical framework of the Bar-On Model of EI (see section 2.3.3). The discussion will be structured according to the following five broad hierarchical conceptual components and the interrelated emotional and social competencies of the Bar-On Model of EI (Gignac et al.,2003:1193):

- *Intrapersonal EI* which encompasses competences pertaining to the inner-self
  (e.g., self-regard, self-awareness, assertiveness, self-actualisation).

- *Interpersonal EI* represents interpersonal skills and functioning (e.g., empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships).

- *Stress management EI* encompasses the ability to cope effectively with stress (e.g., stress-tolerance and impulse-control).

- *Adaptability EI* represents how successfully one copes with environmental demands (e.g., effectively managing problematic situations).

- *General mood EI* encompasses the ability to enjoy life (e.g., optimism, happiness).

Theseemotional and social EI competencies will now be explained as they were revealed during the empirical investigation.

4.7.1 Intrapersonal EI

When the teachers encounter disciplinary problems that cannot be managed, they sometimes expose their lack of intrapersonal competencies of assertiveness, self-regard, self-awareness and self-actualisation.

4.7.1.1 Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the ability to express one's emotions in a non-destructive manner (Geher 2004:138). Screaming and shouting at a misbehaving learner communicates the teacher's emotion destructively in the classroom, and exacerbates the tension between learner and teacher. One participant attributed the ill-discipline in her class to her inability to "really assert" herself and felt that she was failing as a teacher because she was unable to bring about the discipline that her learners needed. The particular teacher was observed to be soft-spoken and of a quiet disposition. When the teachers lack assertiveness, they invariably feel incompetent, "It makes me feel like I can't keep control of the class… so obviously …I'm not doing it right." Such teachers understandably feel disappointed with themselves.

4.7.1.2   Self-regard

Self-regard refers to one's ability to assess and accept one's emotions (Geher, 2004: 138). Teachers who experience disciplinary problems "never switch off". They constantly assess their emotions:

> *You could be sitting in a movie… and you'd be thinking…and playing back in your head what happened in the classroom… how you could change that?*
> *[FHN, 23 years]*

Teachers often express a poor self-regard and are reluctant to accept the persona they adopt when provoked by misbehaving learners:

> *That's not the person you are… you don't want to be this person … and you end up doing things that is not you.*   *[FTP 7 years]*

Misbehaving learners force the teachers into acting in a manner that is generally not in synchrony with their normal emotional behaviour. Under such circumstances they experience difficulty in accepting their emotional outbursts as a reflection of their inner beings.

4.7.1.3   Self-awareness

The ability to be aware of and to understand one's emotions is regarded as *self-awareness* (Geher, 2004:138). Nine of the participants indicated that they reflected on their actions after a disruptive encounter, reinforcing the fact that teachers *"don't switch off"* after the incident. They often do introspection in an attempt to understand their emotions:

> *Long after I've left the classroom, that experience* [of ill-disciplined behaviour]*sticks with me. And I always try to think: 'Why did it happen?' And I try to look beyond the child that's just been sitting in front of me. 'Was it something that I brought from home that I transferred negatively to the children?'*   *[FHN, 23 years]*

Sometimes you think about it … you feel a bit upset because of the way you handled the situation. You get angry and then instead of thinking, you say things. You shout. So it really questions your personality. You have to think: 'Okay, this is what happened … should I have done it differently?' [FTP, 7 years]

Emotional self-awareness is vital to improving emotional-social competencies. If the teachers are able to assess and understand their emotions, they would possibly not repeat their negative responses to the misbehaving child.

4.7.1.4   Self-actualisation

Bar-On (2006:20) defines *self-actualisation* as the process of striving to actualise one's potential capacity, abilities and talents, and is characterised by the ability and initiative to set and achieve goals (see section 1.5.6). When the learners misbehave, they prevent the teachers from actualising their potential and from achieving their goals. The inability to self-actualise is characterised by frustration, sadness, disappointment, de-motivation and demoralisation. Four of the participants spoke passionately about preparing for their lessons and the frustration of not being able to achieve their goals:

It is the most frustrating thing in the world! You prepare. You come in ready to teach and you want to impart so much to them…and the fact that they misbehave … it just gets you frustrated!   [FTP, 4 months]

I always make it a point to be well prepared and I know about the learners' negative attitude to the subject. So, I try to go out of my way to be creative … more innovative in the classroom. And then when I get negative feed-back from the learners, it's very demotivating. Then I sit and I introspect and I think: 'What can I do, to make it better?' And sometimes I can't find a solution… and that really demoralises me.   [FHN,   23 years]

I feel very disappointed that I put so much of work and effort into my lessons… into my preparations. And when learners show a disregard and a total disrespect, I'm terribly

disappointed that all my work has now become futile… not what I expected to achieve in that lesson.   [FTP, 17 years]

It's very upsetting… it's de-motivating… especially if you have an enjoyment for a subject … you walk into the class with enthusiasm and then that disrespect just kills your motivation and you really don't give your best.   [FTP, 22 years]

Thompson (2009:43) is of the opinion that such teachers experience difficulty in staying enthusiastic and become frustrated and apathetic at school when their best efforts at maintaining discipline prove to be futile.

4.7.2   Interpersonal EI

Interpersonal emotional-social competencies refer to empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationships (Gignac et al.,2003:1193). The process of teaching and learning is built on interpersonal functioning that fosters empathy, social responsibility and positive interpersonal relationships. The participants experienced these issues as follows.

4.7.2.1   Empathy

The ability to be aware of and to understand another's emotions is referred to as *empathy* (Geher, 2004:138). Although misbehaving learners may anger and frustrate the teacher, the teachers acknowledge that they won't know what the child could be experiencing outside of school, and concede that the misbehaving child may have sought attention, and the teacher may have approached the situation "the wrong way". Upon reflection, the teachers often realise the need to understand the child, and may make amends to rectify the situation:

Is it something that that child is experiencing at home? They need an outlet for their anger. Were they venting? And I try to find a context bigger than just the classroom… and in some occasions I call the child back, or sometimes they come back and apologise the next day. Sometimes I call them after a few days … when the dust has settled… and just ask: 'How are you? Are you ok?'…hoping that I'm

> *opening the door to them to say: 'I did that because of this reason' And then, if it's a problem, I can try to find a solution. [FHN, 23 years]*

The teachers usually express the desire to empathise with misbehaving learners but may experience challenges in finding the time to connect with the learner in overcrowded classrooms.

4.7.2.2   Social responsibility

The ability to identify with one's social group and cooperate with others is regarded as *social responsibility* (Geher, 2004:138). The teachers acknowledge that they share the social responsibility to act *in loco parentis* to a learner. Therefore, when confronted by ill-discipline, teachers may experience emotions cognisant with that of a parent:

> *I'm looking at the learner as my child… and if they talk about me this way… they would have been talking about their parent as well… about their mom.   [FTP, 8 years]*

> *I think… being a mother… and sometimes… I think I'm older than their moms ….and they showing me such blatant disrespect. It doesn't make you feel good.   [FTN, 30 years]*

The social responsibility of acting *in loco parentis* evokes hurt and disappointment when the learners do not act reciprocally as children would with their parents.

4.7.2.3   Interpersonal relationships

The ability to form and maintain intimate relationships based on emotional bonding is referred to as the *emotional-social competency of interpersonal relationships* (Geher, 2004:138). A participant who was a victim of teacher-targeted bullying expressed difficulty in communicating with the offending learner, and could not bear looking at him in class. The inability to emotionally bond with learners who misbehave is perhaps the greatest challenge experienced by the teachers because "if they say something or do something personal towards you… it affects you mentally and emotionally". However, teachers with strong interpersonal competencies sometimes choose to make amends with the learner in an attempt to form a positive relationship with him or her:

> *I actually come back and I'll apologise to the child because I don't feel good that I reprimanded the child … because you almost reduced him to nothing… when you should have called him aside and spoken to him about it… and eventually he'll apologise.* [FTN, 30 years]

Interpersonal relationships in the classroom are affected when the teachers lack the emotional-social competency to manage ill-discipline.

4.7.3   Stress-management EI

Stress management encompasses the competencies of stress-tolerance and impulse-control (Gignac et al.,2003:1193). The teachers' stress levels are largely dependent on the manner in which they experience the various challenges at school. Learner disciplinary issues present the greatest challenge to teachers (Lekganyane, 2011:2; Masekoameng, 2010:3; Subbiah, 2004:17; Tiwani, 2010:1).

4.7.3.1   Stress-tolerance

Stress-tolerance refers to the ability to effectively manage one's emotions (Geher, 2004:138). Managing one's emotions connotes how one regulates one's emotions in respect of either

repressing or allowing an emotion to surface. One participant displayed a high stress-tolerance level when she described how she managed her anger when she was challenged by a learner:

> *A learner challenged me to hit her and I almost gave in to it but something inside of me stopped me. Instead of hitting the child I just hit the table ... just to make a noise to show how angry I was. I also communicated through words that what they were doing and saying were very wrong and whatever it is that she might expect from me might not always be the outcome that she might be waiting for.*
> *[FTP, 1 year]*

Disciplinary problems challenge the stress-tolerance levels of teachers. The situation is aggravated if the teacher has a low stress-tolerance level and does not have a suitable repertoire of disciplinary measures to deal with ill-discipline. Such teachers often engage in disciplinary measures that are in conflict with the rules of the DoE (see section 2.7.1).

4.7.3.2   Impulse-control

The ability to effectively control one's emotions is referred to as *impulse-control* (Geher, 2004: 138). To act on impulse means to act without reflection. *Impulse-control*is the ability to act *with* reflection. The teacher quoted in 4.7.3.1conceded that her first impulse was to hit the learner who challenged her, but her high impulse-control competency caused her to hit the table instead. Had she hit the learner, she could have been charged for assault (see section 2.7.1.1). Learners who misbehave constantly challenge the impulse-control competencies of the teachers.

Sometimes teachers act without reflection when they feel personally threatened:

> *We can think and act like educators ... but sometimes, when you feel personally threatened and your safety is compromised, it's that survival instinct that kicks in! I don't know ... if a child strikes out at me whether I'll be able to say: 'Ok, I'm the adult here and you're the child... let me not retaliate'. I think my survival instinct will kick in.[FHN, 23 years]*

The above excerpt illustrates how a low impulse-control competency level can result in a "fight or flight" reaction from the teacher (Boniwell, 2006:11). Learners who continually present challenging behaviour erode the impulse-control competency of the teachers.

4.7.4 Adaptability EI

Adaptability refers to how successfully one copes with environmental demands, particularly in managing problematic situations (Gignac et al.,2003:1193). Misbehaving learners create problematic situations for the teachers. How the teachers manage the situation is dependent on the teacher's adaptability-competency level. Teachers who manage to diffuse a volatile situation have a high adaptability level. One participant reported that he *"changed tactics"* in his interaction with the learners when the classroom environment became problematic. Contrastingly, an inability to adapt to a problematic learner may lead to a teacher "snapping at other learners" or "screaming and shouting" and acting in ways that were uncharacteristic of the teacher:

> *You sometimes feel humiliated. It also affects you socially ... we spend most of the time with these learners ... you still have to teach the same learners ... you still have to look at them ... you still have to be with them the whole day... it is humiliating.   [MTP, 15 years]*

The humiliation experienced by the teacher and the disrespect displayed by the disruptive learner impact negatively on the adaptability-competency of teachers.

4.7.5 General mood

General mood encompasses the ability to enjoy life (Gignac et al.,2003:1193) namely, the competency of optimism which is to be positive and hopeful, and the competency of happiness which is to feel content with oneself (Geher, 2004:138). Disruptive behaviour   affects the general mood in a classroom:

> *It gets you frustrated. It affects the entire lesson and it affects everybody's mood, because when I get frustrated, I start snapping at the other learners*

unintentionally... and then everyone else gets upset and then the classroom environment is not conducive to learning.   [FTP, 4 months]

The participants expressed feeling "depressed", "demoralised", "demotivated" and "saddened" when the learners continually misbehaved, despite their best efforts at maintaining discipline. They may try not to take it personally when learners disrespect them but they do feel very disappointed. "Shouting at one person and having the other 30-some-odd learners watching you do this was also described as being *"very disappointing to yourself"*. Disruptive learners elicit negative emotions in teachers, preventing them from maintaining a positive outlook and enjoying their jobs.

4.8   COMMON DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

The participants were asked to list and comment on the effectiveness of some of the common disciplinary measures used in their classes.
Disciplinary strategies may be categorised into proactive and reactive disciplinary strategies (see section 2.8). The sample in this study was predominately teachers who experienced disciplinary problems, hence most of the participants reported reactive disciplinary measures.

4.8.1   Proactive disciplinary measures

Two participants described how they thwarted disciplinary problems in their classes:

I keep the classroom as occupied as possible because most of the discipline issues happen when learners are not fully occupied. So, I always make it a point to walk around the entire class among the learners, do a little bit of elbow-marking, and go sit among the learners in one of the chairs and then do the marking there. [FHN, 23 years]

I think it's the tone the teacher sets in the class ...the interaction that the teacher has with a learner, will actually result in a peaceful class or a disruptive class. They know when it's time to work and that they are monitored all the time. So, I'm

not at my table when they are working. That's when they're doing all sorts of nonsense on their cell-phones and stuff. That is why I'm right near their desks.
[MTP, 10 years]

The ability of the two participants to manage their classes affirms that classroom management determines whether lessons are delivered smoothly, despite the presence of learner disciplinary problems (Bechuke & Debeila, 2012:241). The teachers' emphasis on "moving around the classroom" also affirms the effectiveness of *with-it-ness,* a feature of Kounin's classroom Management Model (Lefrancois, 1997:381). According to Lefrancois (1997:381), *classroom management* refers to disciplinary actions, daily routines, seating plans and the scheduling of lessons. Great effort, commitment, resourcefulness and perseverance are vital in the quest for effective classroom management.

4.8.2   Reactive disciplinary measures

The common reactive disciplinary measures of the participants and their views on their effectiveness are represented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5   Reactive disciplinary measures of the teachers

Disciplinary measure	Comments
Isolation	Works the most because "it prevents the disruptive learner from socialising with the other learners".
Keeping a discipline record file	"Logs everything about the learner" and is used during parent meetings.
Cleaning-up outside the classroom while being watched by a responsible learner	Learners learn "a little bit more responsibility".
Exercising - e.g.,crunches	"It's really helped … especially with the girls because they don't like to do it".
Sending "discipline letters" home	" It doesn't work because instead of the parents supporting you and offering some kind of sterner disciplinary measures they choose to come to school and ask for solutions"
Kneeling on the floor	"It doesn't really work".
Writing messages in notebooks and asking the parents to sign	"That's not working" – no returns from parents.
Sending learners to the SMT	"Wasting time" because teachers "don't have faith" in management
Calling parents to school immediately after the incident /sending learners home immediately after the incident and asking them to report back with their parents	"It's not making much of a difference because the child changes for that short period of time and then it's back to square one. It doesn't bother them. It's become a norm between the naughty kids."
Verbal reprimands	Learners "did not change" or "not working"

Apart from the measures listed in Table 4.5, confiscating books when copying homework in class, writing lines and staying-in during break-time were also listed as disciplinary measures. One participant indicated that she used a "stick" which she called her "stick of knowledge" ,because it was used for "transferring knowledge". She made reference to the Bible stating "one should not spare the rod and spoil the child". Although she was adamant that the learners seemed

to fear the stick, she maintained that the learners were aware that the law was on their side and that there was very little recourse for their poor behaviour. Despite being warned about and being "constantly afraid" of being charged for corporal punishment, she reasoned:

> *I would never hit a child in way that I won't hit my own child. And when there isn't much more you can do and the pressure is on you to deliver in terms of the lesson as well as the discipline, your fear tends to take a backseat over trying to maintain the discipline. [FTP, 22 years]*

The use of corporal punishment appears to reinforce the findings in Maphosa and Shumba's (2010:392-394) study that corporal punishment helped to keep the learners focused and served as a disciplinary measure that deterred learners from misbehaving.

Three participants considered detention to be an effective disciplinary measure because "no kid wants to stay in after school" and, more importantly, because it was within the law. The demerit and detention system used in ex-Model C schools was lauded as being very effective by one participant.

4.9   HOW THE TEACHERS DE-STRESS

Learner misbehaviour reportedly causes high levels of professional stress and personal distress in teachers (Clunies-Ross et al.,2008:695). It is therefore important that teachers find strategies to de-stress in order to minimise the emotional impact of disruptive encounters. The participants were asked to relate how they relaxed after a particularly disruptive encounter with a learner.

- Some participants used physical exercise to de-stress. One participant indicated that she went to the "gym ... to work out all that tension and stress" whilst another mentioned "running" as a de-stressing strategy. Although the physical exercise relieved the anger and the frustration, they admitted the incident remained in their thoughts, as they constantly thought of plans to deal with the misbehaviour.
- Discussion of incidents was also used to de-stress. For example, two teachers mentioned discussions with other teachers as being therapeutic. Engaging with other teachers was reported to have "some kind of cathartic healing" because it presented the opportunity for

empathy and solutions. Discussions with family members also allowed for empathy if members of the family were also in the field of education, but sometimes the discussions were "minimal" to avoid "upsetting" the family, or did not help much as the family members were not in the same profession.

- One participant indicated that she always found the time to laugh and joke because it was important to "to bounce back" after a disruptive encounter.

- Another participant found comfort in food. She mentioned that she would eat a slab of chocolate.

- Finally, "time-out" was listed. The teachers referred to taking a day off, socialising with friends, watching TV, and reading the newspaper as ways of de-stressing.

4.10   THE ROLE OF THE SMT

In order to ascertain the role of SMTs in addressing indiscipline, the participants were asked how the SMT could assist the teachers with disciplinary problems. When misbehaving learners become unmanageable in the classroom, the teachers often seek assistance from the SMT. The offending learner is either sent out of the classroom to a member of the SMT, or a SMT member is called to the classroom. This measure is intended to signal the seriousness of the offence to the misbehaving learner, and to subject the learner to disciplinary action from the SMT. It is also intended to seek emotional support since the teacher may have exhausted all other disciplinary measures. Thus, the participants referred to the role of the SMT with regard to the learners, and to the teacher.

Teachers expressed the view that the SMT could assist them continuously with the learners as follows:

> *Learners are carrying problems and burdens into the classroom which we as educators are not suitably equipped to help with. I think regular consultations… telephone calls … having feed-back from parents… monitoring their behaviour at home … monitoring their behaviour in school and helping the child to rectify their behaviour. The assistance of a social worker or a professional psychologist [are needed]. [FTP, 17 years]*

Thus, the participants believed that by means of a support network with the parent and the relevant stakeholders, the SMT could assist the learner to deal with the issues manifesting as disciplinary problems. A support network with the parent, teacher and the psychological services will offer a holistic approach to dealing with misbehaviour. Such networks, if initiated by the SMT, will strengthen the discipline structures of a school, and offer emotional support to the teachers.

With regard to the teacher, four participants indicated that the SMT could assist the teachers by being more visible. It was felt that more visits to the class and the checking of learners' books by the SMT would deter learners from misbehaving. It was also reported that "if learners know that there's a risk of managers walking past a classroom, they tend to settle down much easier".

One participant echoed the need for a more supportive relationship between the SMT and the teachers:

> We need the school management to be there… not to be reactive when you strike a child and call you to a hearing and discipline you. They need to be proactive … walk around…let learners see there are people around. Management must not be sitting in an ivory tower far removed from the educators. [FHN, 23 years]

The teachers would invariably feel safe and protected if the possibility of a SMT member visiting a problem class was high. Moreover, one teacher felt that the managers should not view "a breakdown in discipline in the classroom as a direct fault of the teacher … an inability by the teacher to control the class". The teachers expected the SMT to respond empathetically to their experiences of indiscipline in the classroom:

> The matter is to be taken up quickly and seriously … not to say: 'I will give the learner a chance. If you do it again… this is what is going to happen' … because at the end of the day, the learner might think that he or she has got more power than you … or than the management. The management should not play with a child who is ill-disciplined. If an adult brings the matter up, they should consider it seriously. [MTP, 15 years]

The participants believed that the SMT must endeavour to form a supportive relationship with the teacher in addressing disciplinary problems expeditiously. Learners who are not sternly reprimanded by the SMT cultivate a culture of non-compliance that perpetuates the chaos in the classroom.

4.11   THE ROLE OF THE DOE

The SMT is guided by laws and policies that determine how indiscipline is managed at schools (see section 2.7.1). In a document entitled *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment, a Practical Guide for Educators,* the DoE (2000:9-14) details alternatives to corporal punishment that are intended to support the teachers in managing discipline within legal parameters. However, this document presents only proactive measures in maintaining discipline in the classroom and is silent on what reactive measures may be used when learners misbehave. This lack of clear, practical and acceptable alternatives by the Department was scathingly criticised by all the participants when they were asked how the DoE could assist the teachers with disciplinary problems..The teachers criticised the Department's lack of empathy in dealing with indiscipline at schools.

4.11.1 Criticisms

Scathing criticisms of the lack of empathy by the DoE are succinctly encapsulated in the following excerpts:

> *They are in their offices sorting out the theoretical aspects of what educators should be doing. So it's easy for them to just put it down on paper to say: 'This is what we should follow', instead of implementing that first before they actually tell us how we should go about governing the learners in school in terms of behaviour.* [FTP, 1 year]
>
> *I always feel that these people that come up with these fancy legislations, school rules and stuff like that, have never set foot in the class … have never had a sixteen-year-old stand nose to nose with them telling them:'Go stuff you… I'm not interested in your subject!'* [FHN, 23 years]

It is evident that the teachers perceive that the Department has been out of sync with the teachers in the classroom. The teachers accuse the Department of placing the emphasis on the theoretical aspects of school governance and generate policies that prove to be unpractical and unworkable. The proponents of these legislations have not been personally subjected to learner indiscipline and are therefore not capable of empathising with the teachers. The DoE defending the ill-disciplined learner and criticism of the teachers' disciplinary measures were further criticised as leading to a negative portrayal of the teachers in the media. This lack of support for the teacher and an emphasis on the rights of the learner were also enunciated by another participant:

> *If you suspend the child, the child will go to the department. The next day the head of the institution will receive a phone* call *from a department official: 'Send that child back to class', which means even the institution is now powerless to act. The department who are sitting in their offices should listen to us … this is **our** concern … this is what we are going through every day.* [MTP, 15 years]

The DoE is also accused of evading to ascertain what precipitated a teacher to retaliate towards a learner, or the circumstances leading to the incident. It is expected of teachers to always act in a measured manner even when being physically threatened. The teachers lament the lack of laws

protecting their safety in the schools and they feel that the Department avoids being challenged by the parents. They therefore find it easier to let the teacher go rather than fight a community of 500 parents because of one teacher.

4.11.2   Suggested departmental initiatives to assist the teachers

The following suggestions were forwarded as possible initiatives that would address indiscipline in schools:

4.11.2.1   Implementable laws and policies regarding alternatives to corporal punishment

According to the participants, policies and guidelines that are easy to implement will support the teachers. The policies should provide specific guidelines on what reactive disciplinary measures may be regarded as acceptable and within the law. Policies should be "clear", "realistic" and "straightforward".

> *There needs to be other punishments that are sent by the department. Not just generalistic. It needs to be fine-tuned and direct. If a learner is constantly talking in class, what possible measure can we follow? If learners don't do their homework, what can we do? Don't just say:'The management and the school can find suitable punishments for them'. Give us ideas… something to fall back on… because sometimes we do something and it's against the law but it is not stipulated. So, the policies need to be more straightforward.*   *[FTP,   4 months]*

The Department should suggest "practical, usable alternatives",whilst being cognisant of contextual issues, such as large classes and the teachers' consequent inability to offer individual attention. The alternatives should be "something that is a bit stricter than vocally" reprimanding the learner. The legitimisation of detention as a compulsory disciplinary measure at schools was a widely favoured alternative to corporal punishment.

4.11.2.2   School counsellors

All the participants suggested that the Department appoint school counsellors to assist the learners with personal issues that often manifest as indiscipline. The teachers were mindful of the financial constraints of employing counsellors, but added that they could be appointed *"on a rotational basis"* within a school district.

4.11.2.3   Workshops

Almost all the participants expressed the need for workshops on learner discipline. These workshops should be organised for school managers and teachers, not solely to address indiscipline but also to *"listen"* to issues pertaining to teachers at grass roots. By presenting a forum for the teachers to meet, they could possibly share experiences and find viable solutions among themselves.

4.11.2.4   Establishing discipline committees at schools

One participant suggested that the DoE should establish discipline committees at the schools to send a stern message to the learners that if they committed a misdemeanour in the class they would be summoned to appear before the discipline committee. The participant elaborated that the committee should consist of a member of the SMT, level 1 teachers, a member of the School Governing Body, representatives of the parents other than School Governing Body, and perhaps a psychologist. It was felt that this holistic approach was necessary because "it takes a village to raise a child".

4.11.2.5 Task teams and school raids

The participants also suggested that the DoE should establish and deploy task teams "to assess what's happening at schools". The learners will be aware that they are being monitored by the Department, thereby offering support to the SMT. Regular raids for contraband would enhance the safety of both the learners and the teachers.

4.11.2.6 Changing the perception of teachers in the media

The DoE should be circumspect when responding on issues of corporal punishment to the media. Emphasis on the illegality of corporal punishment deflects from the learners' indiscipline and encourages further attacks on the teachers because the learners appear to be safeguarded by the law. For example:

> *The department is always going on in the media about educators who strike children or practice corporal punishment. But they're not giving us any alternatives. And, in the absence of any alternatives … sometimes you feel like there's nothing else that you can do. So, give us alternatives and don't always portray in the media that the teacher is the bad person. The DoE is doing us educators in the classroom a dis-service by portraying us negatively in the media. You're reading in the paper that teachers strike learners. But what precipitated that?   [FHN, 23 years]*

The Department should endeavour to present teachers positively in the media because "society at large does not seem to have any respect for teachers". The Department should rather show how the disciplinary problems precipitate a teacher into acting unlawfully. The Department should also comment on the possible contextual factors that may lead to corporal punishment without condoning the teacher's actions (see section 4.6). Society would perhaps adopt a more empathetic approach to the teaching profession if they were aware of the stressful workload of teachers.

4.12   SUMMARY

The findings of the empirical research were presented in this chapter. A description of the demographic profile of the participants was followed by a discussion of the findings from the semi-structured interviews. The findings included the common discipline problems that the teachers experience, the teachers' worst experiences and their views on the causes of the disciplinary problems. In particular, the findings revealed the impact of disciplinary problems on the emotional and social well-being of the teachers. The ways how teachers de-stressed and the role of the SMT and the DoE concluded the discussion of the findings.

The next chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the research will be presented. The conclusions serve to answer the main research question, namely, *How do the teachers experience learner discipline problems in a selected secondary school?* Recommendations are made for coping strategies aimed at assisting teachers in managing discipline in the classroom.

Thus, this final chapter focuses on the following:

- the conclusions of the research findings;
- recommendations (based on this study and for further research);
- limitations that reflect the shortcomings of the study; and
- a brief conclusion that summarises the study as a whole.

5.2   CONCLUSIONS

This section is presented according to the categories and sub-categories that were identified from the findings and presented in the previous chapter. All of these conclusions aim to answer the main research question, as set out in Chapter one (see section 1.2). The conclusions that are derived from both the literature review and the empirical investigation will form the framework of the discussion.

5.2.1   Common disciplinary problems that the teachers experienced

As mentioned in Chapter two, *disciplinary problems* refer to actions on the part of a learner that interrupt, detract or prevent the process of teaching and learning (see section 2.4).Teachers are intolerable to disruptions because the task of teaching demands discipline and structure.

According to the literature review, *learner indiscipline* may be categorised as disruption of teaching, defiance and disrespect of teaching, and teacher-targeted bullying (see section 2.5).

The empirical investigation revealed that the teachers in this research experienced excessive talking, incomplete homework, late-coming, back-chatting, arguing, a lack of concentration, bantering, and eating in the class as common disruptions to teaching (see section 4.4). Defiance and disrespect of teaching manifested as a flagrant flouting of school rules and structures, and a total disregard for the teacher in the classroom. The teachers in this study reported vicious rumours, physical attacks and vulgar threats as examples of teacher-targeted bullying. Thus the common disciplinary problems experienced by teachers in this study exemplified the studies cited in the literature review.

5.2.2   The worst experiences of ill-discipline

This study revealed disrespect, arrogance and personal attacks on teachers as the teachers' worst experiences of ill-discipline (see sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2). The teachers regarded persistent arguments and arrogance as disrespectful. Verbal abuse, being spoken to condescendingly and being provoked into arguments that degenerated into "ugly verbal contests" were among their worst experiences. Personal attacks on teachers included rumours, derogatory comments, vulgar threats, and physical assault.

The worst experiences that the teachers mentioned in the empirical investigation epitomised the disrespect, arrogance, defiance and sense of lawlessness displayed by the post-apartheid youth. The teachers are being forced into a "fight and flight" response, as attacks on teachers become increasingly more frequent and violent (see section 1.1).

5.2.3   The teachers' views of the causes of disciplinary problems

The literature review in this study focused on the Bronfenbrenner (Pettipher & Swart, 2005: 10) Ecological Model of disciplinary problems. The review presented a detailed discussion of how deficiencies in these interlocking relationships impact on the development of a child (see section 2.6).

The empirical study substantiated and expanded on the findings of previous researchers as teachers attributed indiscipline to dysfunctional relationships between and/or among the learners in the many interlocking relationships in which they engage. The main conclusions in this regard are indicated below.

Dysfunctional primary relationships with the family, peers, the school and the teacher in the micro-system of the learners' lives often manifested as indiscipline in the classroom. Parents who do not foster harmonious relationships with the school in the learners' meso-systems presented opportunities for deviant learners to set the parents up against the school, and *vice versa.* The DoE and a "patriarchal society" were regarded as contributing to misbehaviour in the exo-system of the developing child. The negative portrayal of teachers in the media and the disrespect of boys towards female teachers in particular were viewed as contributory factors to ill-discipline in the classroom (see sections 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3).

The findings in the macro-system of the developing child presented strong evidence that the culture of disrespect, ill-discipline and over-emphasis of child's rights were of the primary causes of disciplinary problems. It is perhaps in the macro-system that teachers experience the most overt decline in learner discipline. A culture of oppositional deviant behaviour towards elders and all those in authority is characteristic of the present post-apartheid youth. It is precisely this overbearing awareness of rights and demands that the teachers find frustrating and restrictive in their process of teaching and learning (see section 4.6.4).

5.2.4 The impact of disciplinary problems

The impact of disciplinary problems, in essence, conceptualises the main research question in this study, namely *how do the teachers experience learner disciplinary problems in a selected secondary school?* As stated in Chapter 1 (section 1.2), the aim of this study was to gain access to the inner world of the teachers' subjective experiences, which is regarded as the life-world of the participants. The study intended to access the "phenomenal space", and to explore the teachers' "lived experiences" of disciplinary problems(see section 1.4.1). This aim was achieved by asking the participants to explain how they felt when the learners misbehaved in their classes, and how this experience affected them when they were at home.

In keeping with the humanistic paradigm within which this study was undertaken, the Bar-On (2006) Model of EI was chosen as the theoretical framework to analyse the responses of the participants. Since teaching involves the primary focus of the Bar-On Model of EI, namely, understanding oneself and others, relating to other people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate environmental demands, the Bar-On Model of EI presented a suitable theoretical framework for this study (see section 2.3.3). The basic tenants of the Bar-On Model of EI, the teachers' need for EI and the link between disciplinary problems and emotional-social intelligence was explained in Chapter 2 (see sections 2.3.2, 2.3.4 and 2.3.5).

The empirical study was analysed according to the following five broad hierarchical conceptual components, and the interrelated emotional and social competencies of the Bar-On (2006) Model of EI (see section 4.7):

- *Intrapersonal EI,* which encompasses competences pertaining to the inner self (e.g., self-regard, self-awareness, assertiveness, self-actualisation).
- *Interpersonal EI* represents interpersonal skills and functioning (e.g., empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships).
- *Stress management EI* encompasses the ability to cope effectively with stress (e.g., stress-tolerance and impulse-control).
- *Adaptability EI* represents how successfully one copes with the demands of the environment (e.g., effectively managing problematic situations).

- *General mood EI* encompasses the ability to enjoy life (e.g., optimism, happiness).

The participants' experiences were carefully scrutinised to ascertain how disciplinary problems impacted on their emotional-social competencies. The findings were categorised according to the five broad hierarchical conceptual components, and the participants' verbatim responses were presented under the interrelated correlates of the Bar-On (2006) Model of EI. A brief summary of the conclusions related to this issue, is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1   The impact of disciplinary problems

Hierarchical conceptual components	Interrelated emotional-social competencies	Impact of disciplinary problems
• *Intrapersonal EI*	• Self-regard	• The teachers are forced into acting in a manner that is generally not in synchrony with their normal emotional behaviour, and they experience difficulty in accepting their emotional outbursts as a reflection of their inner beings.
	• Self-awareness	• The teachers *"*never switch off.*"* They often do introspection in an attempt to understand their own emotions.
	• Assertiveness	• The teachers express their emotions destruct-ively by screaming and shouting.
	• Self-actualisation	• The teachers are prevented from actual-ising their potential and achieving their goals when the learners mis-behave. They become frustrated and apathetic, and experience difficulty in remaining enthusiastic.
• *Interpersonal EI*	• Empathy	• The teachers concede that misbehaving learners may be seeking attention, and the teacher may have approached the situation incorrectly.
	• Social responsibility	• The teachers who act *inloco parentis* feel hurt and disappointed when the

		learners do not act reciprocally as children would with their parents.
	• Interpersonal relationships	• The teachers are sometimes unable to emotionally bond with learners who may have hurt them emotionally or physically. However, some teachers may choose to make amends with the learner in an attempt to form a positive relationship.
• *Stress-management*	• Stress-tolerance	• Teachers with a low stress-tolerance often engage in disciplinary measures that are in conflict with the law.
	• Impulse-control	• Teachers may act without reflection when they feel personally threatened - results in a "fight and flight" option.
• *Adaptability EI*	• Managing problematic situations	• Teachers who are unable to adapt to a problematic learner may feel humiliated when they verbally attack or yell at the learners.
• *General mood EI*	• Optimism, happiness	• The teachers feel depressed, demoralised, demotivated and saddened when the learners continually mis-behaved, despite their best efforts at maintaining discipline.

It is evident from Table 5.1 how disciplinary problems impact negatively on the well-being of the teachers.

5.2.5   Common disciplinary measures

The historical perspective on disciplinary measures in South Africa was discussed in the literature review (see section 2.7.1). The use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure was deemed illegal according to the prescriptions in The Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a). The South African Council of Educators Act, Act 31 of 2000 (in ELRC, 2003c:17-18) and the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 (in ELRC, 2003a:9) provide the legal determinants within which the teacher has to act when disciplining learners. Possible disciplinary measures were categorised into proactive measures, encompassing the school's Code of Conduct, Classroom Management, in particular Kounin's (in Lefrancois, 1997)Management Model, and Marland's (in Lefrancois, 1997)Caring for Children Model. Reactive disciplinary measures included measures for minor and major offences (see section 2.8).

In this study it was ascertained that teachers who did not experience disciplinary problems practised *with-it-ness*, a feature of Kounin's Management Model (in Lefrancois, 1997)as an effective proactive disciplinary measure. Many reactive disciplinary measures used by the teachers were regarded as ineffective in deterring ill-discipline (see section 4.8.2). The teachers were unanimous that corporal punishment was an effective reactive disciplinary measure despite it being banned, and the prospect of being legally charged. The fact that illegal measures are viewed as the most effective methods to maintain discipline in the classroom depicts the predicaments faced by the teachers when looking for suitable disciplinary measures.

5.2.6 How the teachers de-stress

The need for teachers to handle their stress was discussed in the literature review. Strategies to promote emotional well-being, changing mind-sets, handling potentially explosive encounters, engaging in religious or spiritual experiences and having a support network, were highlighted (see section 2.10).

The findings of the empirical investigation added to the above. The participating teachers identified exercising, discussions with peers and family members, finding comfort in food, joking about an incident, watching television, reading the newspaper, and taking off from work as ways in which the teachers de-stressed (see section 4.9).

5.2.7 How the SMT can support the teachers

As discussed in section 4.10, teachers seek support from the SMT when faced with unmanageable discipline problems in the classroom. The establishment of a support network with the parents and other relevant stakeholders, offering pastoral care to misbehaving learners, regular classroom visits, the checking of learners' books, and acting empathetically and expeditiously when learners were referred to them were listed as ways in which the SMT could support teachers.

5.2.8 How the DoE can support the teachers

It can be concluded that, according to the views of the participants, the DoE and the teachers were not functioning in tandem in respect of school discipline. The teachers criticised the policies governing learner discipline as being unpractical and unworkable, and lacking in clarity. The teachers felt that the DoE lacked empathy in understanding the difficulties faced by the teachers in the classroom because proponents of the policies were never personally subjected to learner indiscipline. The tendency by the DoE to defend undisciplined learners and to castigate teacher disciplinary measures in the media was seen as a negative portrayal of the teachers. It was also felt that the DoE acted reluctantly when investigating teacher retaliation during learner

attacks, and readily opted to dismiss a teacher to appease a community of angry parents. The DoE appeared to be unsupportive and unsympathetic towards teachers experiencing disciplinary problems.

The teachers were of the opinion that the DoE could assist them by providing suitable reactive disciplinary measures, deploying school counsellors to assist problematic learners, conducting workshops for teachers and managers, establishing school discipline committees, and refraining from criticising teachers in the media (see section 4.11.2).

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1   Recommendations for supporting the teachers with regard to disciplinary problems at school

The final aim of this study was to suggest recommendations for the improvement of the coping strategies of the teachers. After an analysis of the sub-questions on the causes of disciplinary problems and how the SMT and the DoE can support the teachers, certain conclusions were drawn that also served as a framework for suggesting specific recommendations, based on this study. Overarching themes between the literature review and the empirical study that were considered to be significant are listed below.

1. It is essential that the teachers understand that disciplinary problems are often the manifestation of dysfunctional relationships that the learners may have with their parents, peers, the school or intra-personally. The teachers must be cognisant that learners may enact suppressed or unresolved emotions destructively within the rigidity of the classroom.

2. The teachers must contextualise the culture of disrespect depicted in the classroom as an extension of the broader culture of defiance prevalent among the post-apartheid youth.

3. The teachers must emphasise to learners the importance of responsibilities that accompany constitutional rights, in an endeavour to counteract the culture of an overemphasis of human rights among post-apartheid learners.

4. The teachers must be assisted by the SMT to form support networks with the parents and psychological services to assist the learners with chronic disciplinary problems.

5. The DoE together with the SMT should engage teachers in robust workshops aimed at seeking viable solutions to learner indiscipline.

6. Finally, it is recommended that the teachers find coping strategies, similar to the religious, spiritual, and/or mystical experiences mentioned in Stanley's (2011:51) study (see section 2.10.4). The teachers should endeavour to find sustainable ways to de-stress so that they may detach from the stressful emotions associated with disciplinary problems, but at the same time remain empathetically connected to their learners.

5.3.2   Recommendations for further research

It is evident from the existing literature that the samples in empirical studies on disciplinary problems are predominately teachers. Much of the empirical investigation focuses on the causes and the impact of learner indiscipline as perceived by the teachers.

A refreshing perspective to the issue of learner indiscipline may be derived from conducting the empirical study with learners, particularly misbehaving learners. Greater insight may emerge into the types of teachers targeted by misbehaving learners. The empirical study may also provide invaluable information on teacher factors that generate learner indiscipline in the classroom. If the thoughts and actions of misbehaving learners are contextualised within their life-worlds, it may be possible to understand learner misbehaviour more holistically.

5.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample in this study was 12 teachers from one urban school in KwaZulu-Natal. As such, it was a case study of one school only. Thus the results may not be regarded as comprehensive and not applicable to all secondary schools in South Africa. The disciplinary structures at this particular school may have prohibited or encouraged learner indiscipline in a manner that may not be reflective of other schools. A larger sample from a range of different schools in different geographical areas would provide a more comprehensive overview of disciplinary problems experienced by teachers.

The researcher in this study is a school manager. It was observed that participants spoke reservedly about how the SMT could support the teachers with disciplinary problems. The participants were also hesitant when asked what factors caused the learners to misbehave in *their* classrooms. The participants appeared to want to absolve themselves from the indiscipline in *their* classrooms so as to be viewed favourably by the manager.

Finally, time was a constraint in the empirical investigation which coincided with the school quarterly tests. The researcher experienced difficulties in facilitating the interviews because the teachers were reluctant to be interviewed after school hours and preferred to be interviewed during part of their non-teaching periods. The interviews were hence restricted time-wise which hampered the probing of responses.

5.5   SUMMARY

The aim of this research was to determine empirically how teachers experience disciplinary problems in the classroom, and to suggest recommendations for the improvement of coping strategies of the teachers.

A qualitative, phenomenological research design was chosen and the empirical investigation was undertaken ata selected urban secondary school where the researcher teaches. The purposive sample comprised 10 teachers who experienced discipline problems and two teachers who were knowledgeable about the subject. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the data were analysed, using the theoretical frameworks of the Bar-On (2006) Model of EI and the Bronfenbrenner (Pettipher & Swart. 2005) Ecological Model of Child Development.

The results indicated that the teachers regarded disrespect, arguments and personal attacks to be their worst experiences of indiscipline. The culture of disrespect, ill-discipline and an over-emphasis of the rights of learners were cited as of the primary causes of disciplinary problems. The teachers experienced hurt, humiliation, frustration, apathy, regret, disappointment, depression, demoralisation, de-motivation and sadness when the learners misbehaved. Although the teachers engaged in a range of activities to de-stress, they conceded that they never "switched

off" after disruptive encounters with learners. The teachers sought support initiatives from both the SMT and the DoE.

Finally, the researcher made recommendations for supporting the teachers with disciplinary problems at school, and also recommendations for further study. The limitations of the study were also identified.

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APPENDIX A

Permission from the Department of Education

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar Tel: 033 341 8610 Ref.:2/4/8/1/16

Mrs S Naicker
50 Alamein Avenue
Woodlands
DURBAN
4052

Dear Mrs Naicker

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"TEACHER EXPERIENCE OF LEARNERS WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL",** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.

2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.

3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.

4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.

5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the

intended research and interviews are to be conducted.

6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 February to 30 June 2014.

7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.

8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.

9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu- Natal Department of Education (Umlazi District) Merebank Secondary School

_____

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 30 January 2014

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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APPENDIX B

UNISA | college of education

Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

S Naicker [6035485]

for a M Ed study entitled

Teacher experience of learners with discipline problems in Secondary Schools in KwaZulu Natal

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue.

Prof KP Dzvimbo
Executive Dean : CEDU

Dr M Claassens
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Reference number: 2014 MARCH/6035485/MC   18 March 2014

APPENDIX C

Principal: Consent to conduct the research

The Principal: Merebank Secondary School

Mr GS Govender
Bombay Walk
Merebank
4052
12 February 2014

Sir

Re: Request to conduct research

I am a Master of Education student at the University of South Africa. The main focus of my study is encapsulated in my research topic: ***How do teachers experience student disciplinary problems in selected secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?*** Such a study will help understand the impact of disciplinary problems on the emotional and personal wellbeing of teachers and possibly help improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Teacher coping strategies and recommendations to deal with student disciplinary problems is to be included in the study.

I have selected Merebank Secondary school to conduct the research. The study will involve interviewing 10 teachers at the school. The teachers will be selected after perusing the School Discipline Book for each grade. The interviews will be conducted after school hours and is expected to be conducted between March-April 2014. The KZN Department of Education has approved my request to conduct the research (Letter of Approval attached).

All necessary ethical measures shall be undertaken to ensure the anonymity of the participants and the school. There will be no risks involved and no monetary rewards given. The teachers' participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw at any point during the interview. The teachers are expected to complete and return a consent form indicating their voluntary participation. As required, the results of the study will be made available to the KZNDE. The school will receive a summary of the findings on request. The findings of the research will be published in the dissertation for which this study is being conducted and may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scientific meeting.

This research is conducted under the supervision of Prof. Salomé Schulze at UNISA (Department of Psychology of Education). Prof. Schulze can be contacted on Schuls@unisa.ac.za. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries regarding the research or any other related matter.

APPENDIX D

Participants: Assent to participate in the research

Dear Teacher

I am a Master of Education student at the University of South Africa. The main focus of my study is encapsulated in my research topic: ***How do teachers experience student disciplinary problems in selected secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?***

The KZNDE has granted permission for this research which involves 10 teachers to be interviewed after school hours for approximately 30 minutes. I would like you to participate in this research. This study will afford you the opportunity to discuss your experiences of disciplinary problems and to shed insight on its impact on your personal and professional wellbeing.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point during the interview. There shall be no monetary reward for your participation and no risks are involved. Your name and the name of your school shall not be identified in the research report. The findings of the research will be published in the dissertation for which this study is being conducted and may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scientific meeting.

This research is conducted under the supervision of Prof. Salomé Schulze at UNISA (Department of Psychology of Education). Prof. Schulze can be contacted on Schuls@unisa.ac.za. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries regarding the research or any other related matter.

Thank you

Sandra Naicker

Signature: _____   Date: _____

E-mail:6035484@mylife.unisa.ac.za   Tel: (031) 4611912(W)   Cell: 0842510282

TEACHER CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I, _____ herewith confirm that I understand the above conditions of the research study which have been explained to me and that I agree to participate in the abovementioned study.

SIGNATURE: _____   DATE: _____

APPENDIX E

Example of a transcription

Researcher: Can you please describe some of the common discipline problems that take place in your grade 12 class?

Teacher: ok…er… I think the first problem is linked to the subject… because it is Afrikaans… and I have a problem with attitude of learners… where learners feel, they can… the Maths and the Physics and the Accounting is more important. So, they will stroll in late… "Mam, we late because we had to complete our Physics work or we were talking to sir about a Maths problem…". The first thing… the first problem I encounter leading to discipline is the attitude to the subject. So late-coming… then it's homework … "I didn't do my Afrikaans homework because I had Maths assignment or a Physics assignment or I had Accounting homework". .. the poor attitude …and the apathy. There's also among the grade 12 learners… this attitude like… er… since I can drop the lowest … er…point…er… the subject with the lowest points when I go to university… "Afrikaans is not going to take me anyway… so let it be Afrikaans. It's my Physics, my Maths, my Accounting… that's going to count. So, let me work on that". So, the attitude and there's no sense of urgency or…er… that learners display. Now, then now, when I have a set lesson to present and I come and I'm all like passionate about delivery in the classroom and I like… run this through in my head … and then suddenly … when I come to class… I'm delivering the lesson to the learners… and I'm expecting participation… it's just like flat! When you ask them, it's "..no mam,… we have an assessment in the next period"… or…er… you know…that's… that's the apathy leading to the ill-discipline…

Researcher: So, in your opinion, what causes learners to misbehave in your class?

Teacher: …mm… I think it's the attitude towards the subject… it's the attitude.

Researcher: Ok, can you please describe for me your worst experience of a learner misbehaving in your class? Not necessarily your Grade 12 ... but your worst experience of a learner misbehaving…

Teacher: (*silence*)… I think it would… I think… if I had to go back in time… it would have to be with a learner…er… Malcolm… where he didn't do the homework and when I asked for the reason and stuff…he says to me… "what good is this going to do, if I do the homework? It's not going to help me. So, I'd rather take this time and do some other homework… homework that'd going to help me…" It ended of in an argument where … the point where I felt either he has to leave the

classroom or I have to leave the classroom… or it could become ugly… and eventually I told him... "you need a time out… please leave my room"… and… but it was very upsetting because it was like … er… and the rest of the learners were sitting there… like… you know…secretly… I could feel almost … like… goading him on and… you know. That was unsettling for me.

Researcher: How do you feel when learners misbehave in your class?

Teacher: I feel…er… I try not to take it personally but I feel very… I feel disappointed because I always make it a point to be well prepared and I know about the learner's negative attitude to the subject. So, I try to go out of my way to be creative … more innovative in the classroom. And then when I get negative feed-back from the learners, it's very demotivating… it like… then I sit and I introspect and I think: "what can I do, to make it better?" And sometimes,… I can't find a solution… and that really demoralizes me.

Researcher: How does an encounter with an undisciplined learner affect you when you are at home?

Teacher: It does… it does! I think that being an educator is not like… you know…packing shelves in a supermarket or something … where because I'm so involved with these learners… long after I've left the classroom, that experience sticks with me. And I always try to find out: "why did it happen?". And I try to look beyond the child… that's just been sitting in front of me. "Was it something that I brought from home that I transferred negatively to the children? Or is it something that that child is experiencing at home? They need an outlet for their anger… they were venting? And I try to find a context bigger than just the classroom… and in some occasions… er… I do call the child back… or sometimes… they do come back and apologize the next day. Sometimes I call them after a few days … when the dust has settled… just ask: " How are you? Are you ok?" … hoping that I'm opening the door to them … to say: "Ok… I did that because of this reason"… and then I can… if it's a problem, I can… obviously like…try to find a solution to it.

Researcher: So, how much of time do you think you ponder on this at home? How often? Does it stay with you?

Teacher: Yes!.It does! Ja! I think being an educator… you never switch off. You could be sitting in some… in a movie… and you'd be thinking… playing back in your head what happened in the classroom…and you know… how you could change that? Then I see other people's successes with delinquent learners… then I try to ask: "how did you handle that? What happened there? How did you turn that child around so that I can use that in my class. And I think that even being

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experienced… you can never have enough experience in discipline because… every single leaner and every single situation is different. There's no one solution to everything.

Researcher: How do you relax after a particularly bad encounter with a learner?

Teacher: … er…I must… to be honest (*giggle*)…I probably will eat a slab of chocolate or something like that… but… I do discuss it with other educators… with a view to … to getting solutions and… and… sharing with their experiences… er… I do discuss it with my family. And… er… thankfully my husband being an… in education as well… can offer me some sort of like… you know… he can empathize with me… so he can offer me… some sort of solutions… and sometimes it does… you just can't switch it off! You know, you still have that … when you see the child the next day… you still have that in your head… that you had this encounter with this child and you try to work through it… and get on.

Researcher: What discipline measures do you use when learners misbehave in your class?

Teacher: Before I even start… I … I think you… to keep the classroom as occupied as possible because… most of the discipline issues happen when learners are not fully engaged and occupied. So, I always make it a point to walk around the entire class … among the learners… do a little bit of elbow-marking… and go sit among the learners in one of the chairs there… and then do the marking there… and er…that's like how we try to get around it.

Researcher: How do you think the school management team can assist teachers who have discipline problems with learners?

Teacher: I think management has a big role to play because normally you'll find that learners… it's the same learners that have discipline problems with various teachers. O, it's not unique to one teacher. In that case I think that management has to come forward and draw these learners out of the classroom … sit with them. Sometimes, when you in contact with the child everyday … they sort of take you for granted. I think it's with parents as well. They take for granted that … that's just mom … or just mam. But, if management steps forward then they know that the educator in the class enjoys the support of the management. The educator is not alone in this and… "if you attack"… I say "attack" in inverted commas… "when you attack an educator, you are attacking the establishment… the management of the school. So, management … visibility… asking a learner that's on the verandah … "why are you outside?"… that even… so, like just you know… management must not be seen to be sitting in an ivory tower … far removed from the educators… they have to. I'm all for the hands-on kind of management … where they come here. A child must come down after having a

session with the principal, for example… where he's been spoken to about his discipline and the other children must be able to ask him: "what happened?" … and if he comes back and gives them feedback… that kind of thing will spread through.

Researcher: How do think the department of education can assist teachers who have discipline problems?

Teacher: You know… I for one feel that the department is always going on in the media about… educators who strike children or hit children or practice corporal punishment will be like … you know… will be struck of the roll… and will be punished and things like that … but they're not giving us any alternatives. And, in the absence of any alternatives … when you faced in the class … sometimes whether you believe it or not, that becomes like… the … you feel like there's nothing else that you can do. So, give us alternatives and don't always put … portray in the media … that the teacher is the bad person… that the teacher just randomly struck out at a learner and…and used corporal punishment . because quiet frankly, I always feel that these people that come up with these fancy legislations, school rules and stuff like that… have never set foot in the class … have never had a sixteen-year-old stand nose to nose with them … telling them "you know, I'm really … go stuff you… I'm not interested in your subject!". And… er… sometimes we can think and act and perform like educators … but sometimes… when you feel personally threatened and your safety is compromised … it's that other instinct … that survival instinct … er… that kicks in! And you feel that … I don't know… I have never done it but I don't know if a child strikes out at me whether I'll be able to … er… say "ok.. I'm the adult here… and you the child… let me not re… retaliate. I thi… I almost think my survival instinct will kick in. I think the department is doing us … the department of education is doing us educators in the classroom… the chalk-face … a dis-service by portraying us negatively in the media. Give us support … ok you telling us … corporal punishment is not allowed … we understand. But give us practical, useable alternatives. The things that they say about … er… "call the child aside… counsel the child." When you got 42 children in a class … it… there's just no time in that 47 minutes to call a child aside and leave 41 other children unattended. Maybe they need to establish discipline committees in schools that can … you know can show the learners that "we take this seriously. If you… you commit a misdemeanor in the class, you appear before the discipline committee. And the department must support us. Cause all you reading in the paper is that teachers strike learners. But what precipitated that? What happened before that? Nobody is interested in that. And it's like… we always look like the bad guys.

Researcher: Who do you think should be on this discipline committee that you speak about?

Teacher: The members of school management, level 1 teachers who are at the chalk-face day in and day out must be on that committee, GB… because if it's a serious offence … there will be repercussions and GB needs to be represented there … and I think we need to have a parent component… not necessarily from the GB … but a parent component. Because often parents have this idea that their children are saints and they don't want to acknowledge what their children are capable of doing negatively. So, we need their input as well. Maybe if the school can like … er…access that person, then we get, even a psychologist … you know like here… locally a psychologist in the clinic who can be on the committee as well. It needs to be a holistic approach… there's no one person. You know it takes a village to raise a child.

Researcher: Thank you. Mrs..., is there anything that you would like to add… that I've not covered in this interview with regard to discipline?

Teacher: I think that the things that we learnt about discipline… the … the discipline measures that we use to use… when I first started teaching … are no longer relevant … I for one… although I'm teaching for over 20 years… would appreciate it if somebody would call me to a workshop to listen to my issues… my problems in the classroom … and we can all come up with viable solutions to it. And a big problem I find, is class sizes… cause we dealing with … er… huge class sizes … where we can't be all over all the time. And that's where kids find the little loopholes to start doing the wrong things. So, and we need… we desperately need improved support from school management. At that level of microcosm… we need the school management to be there… not to be reactive when you strike a child and call you to hearing and discipline you… the educator. I mean they need to be proactive … walk around…let learners see there are people around … the teacher is not alone in the classroom there… I would… I would really want more support from management.

Researcher. Thank you Mrs... Thank you for your time and your participation.

Teacher: Pleasure!